

IN THE SAME ROOM—THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF COLLEGE FACULTY WITH  
THEIR ADMINISTRATORS IN A SHARED GOVERNANCE ENVIRONMENT

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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2015

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## **DEDICATION**

For my mother.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES .....	vi
LIST OF TABLES .....	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	viii
ABSTRACT .....	ix
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Coming to the Question .....	1
Statement of the Problem .....	3
Purpose and Research Questions .....	4
Theoretical Framework .....	5
Significance of the Study .....	6
Definitions of Key Terms and Acronyms .....	7
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	8
History and Structure of Shared Governance .....	8
The Role of Faculty in Shared Governance .....	10
Challenges of Shared Governance .....	11
The Future of Shared Governance .....	13
Faculty Perceptions .....	14
How Faculty Perceive Their Administrators .....	14
How Faculty Perceive Each Other .....	17
Administrators' Perceptions .....	19
How Administrators Perceive Faculty .....	19
How Administrators Perceive Themselves .....	20
Conclusion .....	22
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY .....	23
Overview of Methodology—Approach and Rationale .....	23
Methodological Approach .....	25
Theoretical Framework .....	27
Philosophical Assumptions and Research Design .....	28
Participants and Sampling .....	31
Data Collection Procedures .....	34
Data Analysis Procedures .....	37
Initial Engagement .....	38
Horizontalization of Textural Descriptions or Immersion and Incubation .....	39
Thematizing—The Structures of the Experience or Illumination and Explication .....	41
Textural-Structural Synthesis or Creative Synthesis .....	43
Design Issues .....	45
Bias Statement and Ethical Considerations .....	49
Bias Statement. ....	49

Ethical Considerations.....	51
Limitations and Delimitations.....	52
CHAPTER 4. INTRODUCTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS .....	54
College Profiles.....	54
Participant Profiles.....	55
Corona College .....	56
Dr. Dylan Lewis.....	56
Dr. Morgan Robinson .....	57
Dr. Jordan Walker.....	58
Oliver College.....	59
Dr. Kelly Hall.....	59
Dr. Stacy Young.....	60
Dr. Riley Allen.....	62
Underwood College .....	63
Dr. Fran Harris .....	63
Dr. Sam Clark .....	64
Dr. Kim Lee .....	65
CHAPTER 5. FINDINGS.....	67
Theme #1: The Relationships between Faculty and Their Administrators Influence the Level of Faculty Engagement in Shared Governance.....	68
Faculty Acknowledge an Institution's Ultimate Decision-Making Authority Is Vested in the Board.....	69
Faculty Relationships with the Cabinet Are Varied .....	72
Theme #2: Faculty Value Communication and Transparency and Recognize How It Influences Their Participation in Decision-Making.....	87
A Lack of Transparency Decreases Faculty Support for Decisions Made for Their Institutions.....	92
Adequate Transparency Increases Faculty Support for Decisions Made for Their Institutions.....	96
Theme #3: The Extent to Which Administrators Value Faculty Input Influences Faculty Morale and Motivation to Participate in Governance.....	99
Faculty Perceptions of How Administrators Value Shared Governance Influence Their Engagement in Decision-Making.....	99
Faculty Believe That How Much Administrators Value Shared Governance Affects Morale .....	101
Faculty Have Both Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations Influencing Their Engagement in Shared Governance .....	109
Theme #4: The Complexities of Power Influence Faculty Engagement in Governance .....	114
Faculty Responses to Administrative Power .....	114
Evidence of Faculty Power .....	118
Faculty Engagement in Shared Power .....	121

CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	127
Introduction.....	127
Conclusions.....	128
Theme #1: The Relationships between Faculty and Their Administrators Influence the Level of Faculty Engagement in Shared Governance.....	129
Theme #2: Faculty Value Communication and Transparency and Recognize How It Influences Their Participation in Decision-Making .....	130
Theme #3: The Extent to Which Administrators Value Faculty Input Influences Faculty Morale and Motivation to Participate in Governance.....	132
Theme #4: The Complexities of Power Influence Faculty Engagement in Governance .....	133
Implications.....	134
Recommendations for Further Research.....	136
Final Reflection.....	137
REFERENCES .....	140
APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS AND QUESTIONS .....	149
APPENDIX B. SAMPLE SCRIPTS FOR INITIAL CONTACTS WITH PARTICIPANTS ...	154
APPENDIX C. INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT .....	156
APPENDIX D. EXAMPLE OF THEMATIZING .....	159
APPENDIX E. COMMONLY REFERRED TO FACULTY AND INSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEES.....	160
APPENDIX F. COMMON CAMPUS ROLES MENTIONED IN THE RESEARCH .....	161

**LIST OF FIGURES**

FIGURE 2.1 The core units of the American college, adapted from Birnbaum (1988).....	11
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**LIST OF TABLES**

TABLE 4.1 Demographic Information of Colleges .....	55
TABLE 5.1 Themes & Sub-Themes.....	68

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to a number of people for their support and assistance during this dissertation process. I would like to start by thanking my family for their constancy and support as I wrote this dissertation, from the quick check-ins to the reassurances and distractions; special thanks to Marcia, Paul, Rachel, and Wayne. Thanks go out to my friends as well. In particular, I am very grateful to Carole for encouraging me to return to school and for reading an early draft of this paper. And a warm thanks to my friends in our ‘dissertation support group.’

I also want to thank all of the faculty and administrative colleagues I have had over the years whose conversations led to this topic, whose kindness has overwhelmed me, and with whom it has been a sincere pleasure to work and to know. I want to especially thank those who shared their contacts with me. It was very much appreciated.

My thanks to Dr. Thomas Buckmiller, my dissertation advisor, whose patience matched my anxiety step for step and upon whose counsel I relied. Also, thank you to my dissertation committee: Dr. Matthew Hayden who offered some of the most time-saving advice I could have received and Dr. Amy Doling who accepted the responsibility of serving on the committee and turned a dark day into a brighter one.

I extend my deepest thanks to all of the professors who served as participants in this study. Though I cannot name you individually, as you read this, I thank you each most sincerely for agreeing to be a part of this study into your experiences. I enjoyed meeting you, I learned from you, and was reminded again and again about why I love working in academia. It is not just that you are intelligent and thoughtful, but it was in your commitment to sharing knowledge with others that I was truly impressed. Your students are lucky to have you.

Finally, thank you, Mitch. For everything. “Often I’ve wished...”



## **ABSTRACT**

The tensions existing between faculty and administrators at colleges and universities have come to be an accepted part of postsecondary education. Calls from lawmakers for increasing federal and state oversight, decreasing enrollments, and diminishing resources are among the many issues facing colleges today. Faculty and administrators who work at colleges subscribing to a shared governance model of decision-making attempt to address these and other challenges together, in the same room. Finding ways to assure the success of the shared governance process can be a challenge for most colleges, but one on which the future of such governance relies. The purpose of this heuristic phenomenological, qualitative research study was to look at the phenomenon of faculty's lived experience working in a shared governance environment at small private liberal arts colleges. The researcher presents four themes that emerged from the primary data source, which was three interviews of nine tenured faculty members at three different small, private liberal arts colleges in the Midwest. The four themes are: 1) the relationships between faculty and their administrators influence the level of faculty engagement in shared governance; 2) faculty value communication and transparency and recognize how it influences their participation in decision-making; 3) the extent to which administrators value faculty input influences faculty morale and motivation to participate in governance; and 4) the complexities of power influence faculty engagement in governance. These findings could be used to aid faculty and administrators in the conversations about how to improve their own college's practice of shared governance.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Coming to the Question

I have worked in both the public and private sectors, and attended both public and private institutions of higher learning. I have had supervisors with JDs, PhDs, MBAs, and some with no degrees at all. I have done farm work and restaurant work, volunteered with VISTA, and worked in philanthropic advising for private family foundations, but nothing has given me more satisfaction than working in post-secondary education. Once I became more confident in the administrative work of colleges, and experienced, too, the success of helping a student understand the importance of writing well, I believed that I had found a home in the world.

In particular, creating, managing, and cultivating programs has been rewarding work and provided me an opportunity to exercise both my pragmatic and creative sides. I enjoy working with professors to build or improve programs and derive equal satisfaction working with the staff who help to complete the vision. With either group, it is paramount to remain student-centered when developing a new program or making an improvement. At colleges, it is also essential to keep the mission of the college in mind. A project may derail if the focus on students or mission is lost. The importance of remaining student-centered extends into the relationships between faculty and college leadership.

Colleagues, both faculty and administrators, and I often joked over coffee or lunch that “if only we would be consulted” on decisions of importance to our institutions, then everything would be fine. I understand how naïve this view is, but it is an important part of how I came to this particular research question. I was very interested in learning more about how faculty

perceive themselves in their roles as members of their colleges' shared governance, and what their lived experiences are in relationship to their institutions' leadership.

Concerns for the future of their institutions can lead faculty and administrators to disagree over what is perceived to be the “best” path for their college; whether it is the celebrated and well-loved academic traditions of the institutions or how to keep those traditions tenable in an increasingly outcomes-based, assessment-driven post-secondary world (Fleming, 2010; Birnbaum, 1988; Boschken, 1994). Faculty may perceive the administration as only having the “bottom-line” in mind when making decisions affecting the campus. Administrators may complain faculty are overly concerned with how change affects them as individual departments and individual professors, and do not consider the wider implications of changes as they relate to the institution. But it is more complex than that. Heaney (2010) wrote:

The tendency in a loosely coupled system can be to multiply units of governance, layering shared governance units on top a single stakeholder units until the burgeoning structure grinds to a halt. This is the challenge posed by complexity: on the one hand, full participation by all stakeholders is demanded by shared governance; on the other hand, deliberate speed and agility remain desirable institutional characteristics. (p. 75)

Both groups have considerable influence on the definition of their college's mission, the campus climate, and how decisions affect students. While the tradition has been to accept that faculty and administrators will always have a difficult relationship, it is important to understand the implications of this kind of relationship. While it could be argued that colleges have thrived and continue to thrive in an environment of constant opposition, it would be valuable to learn if there are detrimental results of the sometimes hostile nature of these relationships and whether these detriments outweigh the benefits gained by the current structure.

## Statement of the Problem

Tensions exist in the professional relationships between administration and faculty at colleges and universities and, in general, it has come to be an accepted part of academia (Birnbaum, 1992; Bray, 2008; Campbell & Slaughter, 1999; Fleming, 2010; Kauffman, 1994; Welsh & Metcalf, 2003). At colleges that subscribe to a shared governance form of decision-making, some of the tensions between these two groups may be the result of faculty perceptions of administrators having a disproportionate share of power in governance (Birnbaum, 1992; Finkelstein & Cummings, 2012; Heaney, 2010; Balkun, 2011). The faculty role in shared governance is both a right and a responsibility (Crellin, 2010; Gerber, 2014; Morpew, 1999). Gerber (2014) recently noted faculties' disengagement from the process of shared governance and need to re-invest in it or risk losing their influence. Faculty and administration may also have differing views of what constitutes each group's legitimate role in the life of a college (Burbules, 2013; Crellin, 2010; Dill, 1984; Heaney, 2010; Matczynski, Lasley, & Haberman, 1989; Middlehurst, 2004; Morpew, 1999).

Tensions between faculty and administrators may have an unfavorable effect on students and other stakeholders, including campus staff, the recruitment of new faculty and skilled administrators, and the community in which the college is situated (Middlehurst, 2004; Scott, Bell, Coates, & Grebenikov, 2010; Van Ameijde, Nelson, Billsberry, & van Meurs, 2009). If the tensions can be identified, maybe the steps needed to resolve them can be as well and provide insights on how to improve the campus climate and student outcomes (Hoppes & Holley, 2014; Hult, 2005; Mooney, Chrisler, Williams, Johnston-Robledo, & O'Dell, 2007; Somers, Cofer, Austin, Inman, Martin, Rook, & Wilkinson, 1998).

There have been numerous quantitative studies surveying the relationships between college administrators and faculty (Bray, 2010; Finkelstein & Cummings, 2012; Gayle, Tewarie, & White, 2011; Gentry, Katz, & McFeeters, 2009; Johnston, 2003; Levin, 2006; Matczynski et al., 1989; Minor, 2004; Morphew, 1999; Rosser, 2003; Tiede, 2010; Tierney & Minor, 2003; Van Ameijde et al., 2009; Whetten & Cameron, 1985), but few qualitative studies. As Creswell (2014) stated, a qualitative approach provides the researcher a way to represent “the complexity of the situation” (p. 4) through inductive reasoning that allows individual meaning to develop into general themes. A qualitative study may provide a closer examination of faculty perspectives of their relationships with administrators and might reveal ways to decrease the tensions and be able to help shape conversations about decision-making at colleges. Especially now, with colleges coming under closer scrutiny from various stakeholders (federal government, taxpayers, accreditation boards), it is important that these groups find ways to work together for the betterment of their institutions (Crellin, 2010; Levin, 2006; Middlehurst, 2004; Van Ameijde et al., 2009; Welsh & Metcalf, 2003).

### **Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this heuristic phenomenological study was to describe and reflect upon the experiences of nine tenured faculty members from three different post-secondary institutions that use a shared governance model. As such, my research question was: What is it like to be a faculty member at an institution with shared governance? The sub-questions of my study were: what are these professors’ perceptions of their relationships with college leadership in the context of their perceived roles and responsibilities in the shared governance structure; how do these perceptions influence their engagement in shared governance; and how has their

engagement in shared governance influenced their perceptions of their relationships with administrators?

### **Theoretical Framework**

Butin (2010) suggested that a theoretical framework is important to a study as it helps to organize the research and “better understand the potential and limitations of your own topic” (p. 60). Theoretical frameworks provide researchers an opportunity to identify and sort out the assumptions that they have made about the world and the implications those beliefs may have on the research topic. With this in mind, this research study used a social constructivist theoretical framework.

Constructivism is a theory of knowledge, related to interpretivism, which asserts a person actively creates knowledge rather than passively learns it (Creswell, 2014; Crotty, 1998; Narayan, Rodriguez, Araujo, Shaqlaih, & Moss, 2013). Creswell (2014) shared:

Social constructivists believe that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences—meanings directed toward certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas. (p. 8)

Crotty (1998) related constructivism to phenomenology, which I believed supported the use of social constructivism as a theoretical framework for this research study. He stated that, in phenomenology, researchers set aside the knowledge they have been taught and “open ourselves to the phenomena in their stark immediacy to see what emerges for us” (Crotty, 1998, p. 82). For both phenomenological and social constructivist studies, the research relies on the participants’

experience with an understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2014; Crotty, 1998).

This dissertation was a heuristic phenomenological study of the perceptions faculty have of their administrators and I believed using a social constructivist theoretical framework provided a way to organize the research. Additionally, this framework helped me to better understand the potential and limitations of the topic, myself as the primary researcher, and the participants' relationships to the phenomena being studied.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study contributed to the literature on the relationships between college faculty and administrators by looking at the lived experiences of faculty members who have experience working closely with college administrators to better understand the tensions that may exist between these two groups. Discovering the causes of those tensions, which may influence outcomes for students and other stakeholders, may help to resolve them and improve outcomes for members of the university community. This study attempted to situate these relationships within colleges that use a shared model of governance. There also appeared to be a lack of qualitative research on this topic and this study helped to fill the gap.

A closer examination of faculty perceptions of their relationships with administrators might reveal ways to decrease the tensions and be able to help shape future conversations happening at colleges today. Especially now, with colleges and universities coming under scrutiny by various stakeholders (federal government, taxpayers, accreditation boards), it is important that these groups find ways to work together for the betterment of their institutions.

## **Definitions of Key Terms and Acronyms**

This section is devoted to identifying and defining terms and acronyms commonly found in the literature.

AAUP – American Association of University Professors

AACU – Association of American Colleges and Universities; formerly called the Association of American Colleges

ACE – American Council on Education

AGB – Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges

Shared Governance – “Governance of higher education institutions (which has) traditionally been a responsibility shared by faculty, administrators, and trustees” (AAUP).

Tenure – Defined by the AAUP and AACU’s (1940) joint Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure:

After the expiration of a probationary period, teachers or investigators should have permanent or continuous tenure, and their service should be terminated only for adequate cause, except in the case of retirement for age, or under extraordinary circumstances because of financial exigencies. (p. 1)



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter provides a review of the literature on the history and structure of shared governance, the role of faculty in this form of institutional governance, as well as the challenges faced by the shared governance model and its future. It will also present a review of the literature which examines the perceptions faculty have of college administration and the literature that discusses how administrators perceive their faculty colleagues.

#### **History and Structure of Shared Governance**

The AAUP Statement on Government of College and Universities (1966) promotes the idea of shared governance but proposes post-secondary institutions use the document as a guide, rather than a “blueprint.” Burbules (2013) stated: “Faculty and administrators view themselves as partners in a common project; that is what the ‘shared’ in shared governance means” (p. 2).

Leitch (2011) claims that there are three current types of academic governance: shared governance; a “vertical paradigm of corporate decision-making;” and “the binary contractualism of unionization (management versus labor)” (p. 540).

It is widely known that the working relationships between college faculty and their administration are strained (Birnbaum, 1992; Bray, 2008; Campbell & Slaughter, 1999; Fleming, 2010; Welsh & Metcalf, 2003) and, for the most part, these tensions are an accepted part of academia (Leitch, 2011). Some of the tensions result from the perceived imbalance of power in academic governance as well as each groups’ role in the life of a college (Morphew, 1999). Faculty are responsible for academic programs and instruction of the students; administrators are seen as the managers, tasked with “leading the institution toward jointly defined goals” (Morphew, p. 72).

There are several forms of governance employed by colleges and universities. Shared governance is defined by Gayle, Tewarie, and White (2003) as “the structure and process of authoritative decision-making across issues that are significant for external as well as internal stakeholders within a university” (p. 1). It has long been a part of the fabric of liberal arts colleges, stemming from the internal governance system of the Oxbridge (Universities of Oxford and Cambridge) model (Middlehurst, 2004). In the traditional Oxbridge model, senior faculty led committees and fought to maintain the balance of an institution’s academic traditions (Middlehurst, 2004). As the world has grown increasingly complex, the pressures from external constituencies have grown, and so have the pressures on the system of shared governance within colleges and universities (Middlehurst, 2004; Gayle et al., 2003). This type of distributed decision-making model involves time, which is not always available.

Faculty often select a college or university to work for precisely because they believe in the mission, vision, or structure of the institution. As times change and leadership changes, those tenets and structures may change. Fleming (2010) suggested that because faculty and administration “define the institution according to their own perceptions, values, and issues of importance,” (p. 53) it is difficult for institutions to set focused goals that all stakeholders will be willing to pursue. In his research on community colleges, Levin (2006) supported an assertion by Grubb (1999) who determined the obstacles to strong relationships between administration and faculty come from the hierarchical nature of the organization of the institution. A hierarchical form of government fails to empower faculty members and include them in the decision-making process at their colleges (Grubb, 1999; Levin, 2006).

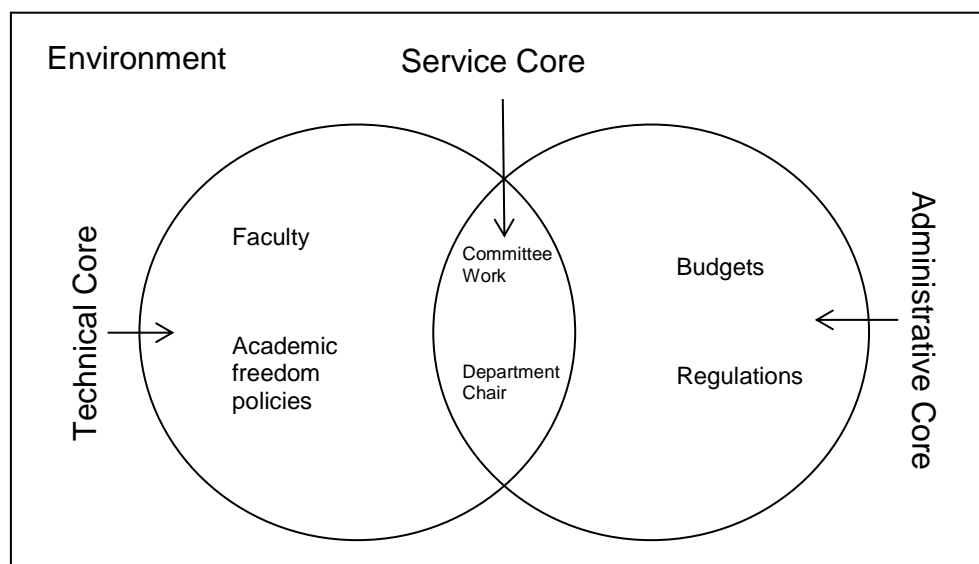
## **The Role of Faculty in Shared Governance**

The role of the faculty in academic governance is important. In Tierney and Minor's (2003) survey on governance, 82 percent of baccalaureate institutions reported that they had some type of faculty governance system in place at their colleges. However, only 54 percent of the 82 percent who responded that their institution had some type of faculty governance believed their institution's faculty had a "high level" of interest in faculty governance (Tierney & Minor, 2003). While this shows a majority of faculty have a great deal of interest in academic governance, it is on the low side and suggests there is room to engage faculty more purposefully in the decision-making responsibilities at their institutions.

Responsibilities of the faculty include "matters of reappointment, tenure and promotion, and academic policies for student enrollment, dismissal, and graduation, as well as assessment and program review...long-range planning and resource allocation for educational programs" (Johnston, 2003, pp. 58-59) as well as committee work. The faculty are also charged with staying involved in the process of shared governance (Balkun, 2011; Heaney, 2010; Johnston, 2003; Morphew, 1999; Murphy, 2004). Murphy (2004) also commented that it is better for faculty to stay engaged, even if it is through passive aggression. The AAUP (2006) also suggested that faculty involvement in the assessment of the college president and other academic administrators helps to improve the administrators' job performance.

Using Birnbaum's (1988) Collegiate Model, Figure 2 is an attempt to demonstrate the faculty role in both the technical and administrative core, but also includes a third core. This third core, which I have chosen to call the "service core," illustrates the importance of faculty responsibilities not outlined in either the technical or administrative core. Leitch (2011) noted that committee work, serving on professional organizations, peer reviewing, and serving on

accreditation boards and on advisory boards are all services faculty provide in addition to their responsibilities. Based on the research conducted for this paper, I am adding academic advising or mentoring to the list of service responsibilities faculty have to their institutions and, in particular, to students.



*Figure 2.1. The core units of the American college, adapted from Birnbaum (1988).*

### **Challenges of Shared Governance**

There are several challenges that colleges and universities face in effecting successful shared governance through internal and external influences, including a changing economy, faculty engagement, wariness of authority, and outside regulation. Lachs (2011) suggested that recent changes to shared governance are a result of higher education administrators' perception of a college as a business rather than an institution of higher learning. Balkun (2011) further noted that the challenges of the current economy are forcing colleges to make tough budgetary decisions because the competition for students is increasing as the numbers of students going to four-year colleges is decreasing and state and federal dollars available to higher education institutions are declining. With fewer resources, colleges have to make tough decisions,

sometimes to the detriment of the curricular program of the college (Balkun, 2011; Lachs, 2011; Morphew, 1999).

The deliberative nature of shared governance can present a challenge to colleges as they deal with the hardships presented by a weak economy; various financial problems which may require quick and decisive action. In a democratic way, shared governance seeks the participation of all stakeholders who make decisions for the college in a process fostering compromise (AAUP, 1966; Heaney, 2010). Being able to be deliberate and agile at the same time is critical. One cannot be sacrificed for the other. Heaney (2010) suggested that in a shared governance environment, it is crucial to find the balance between the two.

One change viewed with increasing skepticism by full-time faculty is the hiring of adjunct faculty to replace tenure-track positions (Eckel & Kezar, 2006; Morphew, 1999). The adjunct faculty has no responsibility in a shared governance environment and as adjunct numbers grow, the academic advising and committee workload increases for the full-time faculty. With intensified demands from students on their time, full-time faculty are stretched thin. Many full-time professors, in order to devote time to mentoring and research, abandon administrative duties (Morphew, 1999).

Faculty participation in their institution's decision-making is critical to the success of shared governance. When faculty are disengaged from shared governance, there is a risk they may not assume leadership roles in their institutions (Murphy, 2004). Lachs (2011) wrote that faculty are often not interested in the actual administration of their college or university. With all of the competing responsibilities, new professors place less importance on academic governance (Johnston, 2003). Heaney (2010) said, "Few decisions are the prerogative of only one constituency" (p. 76) and faculty in shared governance need to stay involved in governance, or

risk losing their voice within the decision-making process for their colleges (Gerber, 2014; Johnston, 2003; Lewis, 2011; Tierney & Minor, 2003; Tinberg, 2009).

### **The Future of Shared Governance**

If shared governance is going to continue to thrive as a structure for academic decision-making, it is crucial to communicate its effectiveness and value to faculty. Johnston (2003) suggested that one of the reasons why the conversation about shared governance is so researched is because new faculty are often surprised by it. Since graduate and doctoral programs do not generally teach about institutional governance, shared governance is a new experience for many first year faculty and needs a great deal of examination. With this in mind, Johnston (2003) suggested that new faculty should be given “an overview of the institution’s governance structure and activities” (p. 61), and assigned a “governance mentor,” and conversations about the role and responsibility of faculty should be a part of faculty orientation.

Conversations about shared governance should also address its sustainability. Crellin (2010) noted:

The sustainability of shared governance rests on several actionable items: the academy’s ability to meet escalating external changes, a re-endowment of the definitions of governance through a shared taxonomy; and an introduction of new principles of intergroup leadership. (p. 72)

Eckel and Kezar (2006) list four changes which may influence the sustainability of shared governance as a means for academic decision-making: 1) relationships between colleges and state governments; 2) fewer tax dollars going to colleges means administrators need to look at increasing private dollars for funding; 3) globalization—increasing numbers of foreign institutions competing with American colleges and universities for students; and 4) workforce

changes—the hiring of adjuncts instead of full-time faculty members. These changes emphasize the external risks to colleges and universities. Institutions will need to learn how to address these external risks as well as the internal risks if they hope to continue their traditions of shared governance and value the input into decision-making from all constituent groups.

Crellin (2010) also suggested that the language of shared governance needs to change. Kramer (as cited in Crellin, 2010) recommends changing “shared governance” to “distributive leadership” to help people see the power in their own opinions. Distributive leadership provides for a more broad range of decision-making, allowing people to have a stronger sense of empowerment and more equality among constituency groups (Kramer, as cited in Crellin, 2010).

### **Faculty Perceptions**

**How faculty perceive their administrators.** Research on the relationships between faculty and administrators strongly suggests that there is a division. Bray (2008) reported that the relations are difficult because the “expectations between faculty and administrators can be confusing” (p. 693). One issue is faculty perceptions of their involvement in institutional governance, the level of this involvement, and their experience of the influence that they have when they are included in policy-making. If faculty are not in favor of an institutional change, there is little hope the change will be successful (Birnbaum, 1992). Finkelstein and Cummings (2012), in their research comparing American faculty to their international peers, suggested that American faculty have a dual purpose complicating their relationships with administration:

As corporate employees, they are subject to corporate authority...and they are subordinate to senior executives. At the same time...they introduce “normative” constraints on senior executive action and exercise considerable power in the limited domains of their expertise... (p. 57).

Because of this dualistic role, faculty see themselves as having a restricted role in the administration of their institutions (Levin, 2006; Finkelstein & Cummings, 2012).

Trust is an important part of the relationship between college administrators and faculty. While it is important administrators, in particular, academic deans, provide for a transparent and equitable evaluation process (Austin, 1990; Bray, 2010), faculty sometimes question the competence of administrators and believe administrators do not support academic freedom (Finkelstein & Cummings, 2012). AAUP (1940) defines academic freedom as the ability of professors and students to study their subjects in an environment free of the fear of punitive measures. Further, it is defined as being critical to the mission of college life. Without it, students' learning would risk being superficial and faculty would not be able to investigate or teach their disciplines with rigor (AAUP, 1940).

Welsh and Metcalf (2003), researching institutional effectiveness, reported faculty believed that it is important for administrators to emphasize assessment as it affects the larger context of what the college values and faculty should be included in the assessment process. Research showed administrators will have successful review processes if they can learn to trust and work together with the faculty (Burbules, 2013; Welsh & Metcalf, 2003). Welsh and Metcalf's (2003) study also reported it is important to faculty to see the administration emphasize what institutional effectiveness means to the college, not just try to meet the benchmarks set from an outsider's or accreditor's view of the college, but also the standards that the college has of itself.

Faculty want to work with administrators who share their passion for education. Fleming (2010) stated that the number of nonacademic administrators, those whose earlier careers developed outside of academia, has increased and may cause a continued deterioration in



interactions between faculty and administration “with each developing and governing by their own values and norms” (p. 255). Middlehurst (2004) posited that this deterioration is linked to the growth of a more bureaucratic culture in colleges today, with a divide growing between college faculty and administrators that has come to resemble the division in corporations between staff and upper management.

Successful relationships between faculty and administrators are built on foundations of accessibility and approachability. In Birnbaum’s (1992) study on faculty support of college presidents, the research showed that when faculty enjoy open communication and a participatory relationship with the college president, the possibility of programming initiatives or other changes being successful increases (Austin, 1990; Balkun, 2011). Burbules (2013) noted:

Under shared governance, administrators assume that the feedback and advice of the faculty will help them make better decisions, and that those decisions will be better understood and supported by professors when they grow out of consultation and openness. They respect the faculty's fundamental rights and control over academic matters and involve them in a broad range of other decisions as well-even when they may not be strictly required to do so. (p. 2)

However, administrators’ commitment to the institution is called into question by the faculty. Welsh and Metcalf (2003) noted that faculty are suspicious of administrators because faculty tend to stay at their colleges longer than administration, who have a relatively high turnover rate, forcing faculty to deal with frequent changes in management style.

Faculty are, by education and training, critical and reflective thinkers and ask their institutions’ administrators to be so as well. Outside pressures are an important consideration for administrators when making decisions about their institutions and can lead faculty to suspect the

“corporatizing” of the college or university. Van Ameijde, Nelson, Billsberry, and van Meurs (2009) noted that increased governmental regulations which require colleges to show how they spend tax dollars are intensifying the competition among universities who are all seeking those same dollars as well as other funding sources and ultimately, the same students. When college presidents respond to these regulations by using more “for-profit” principles of management, faculty sometimes react negatively as it seems like an encroachment on the collegial atmosphere, “highlighting the need to adapt leadership and management principles to a higher education context” (p. 764).

**How faculty perceive each other.** There is also skepticism from faculty about their peers. Austin (1990) noted that when faculty from different disciplines do not take the time to understand each other (and make faulty conclusions about each other), there is the chance decisions will be made that adversely affect tenure and financial resources-allocation. For Lachs (2011), the answer may be clear: “Faculty influence on the operation of the university is an illusion” (para. 2). Lachs (2011) suggested that the problem is not merely about perceptions, but that faculty members lack expertise in managing organizations (and thus are, for example, generally unable to make decisions in a timely manner or handle administrative minutiae efficiently) and so it is reasonable that they have limited involvement in their institutions’ policy-making. Faculty should focus on the duties they are responsible for, such as developing their curricula and assessing student learning in their classes and departments (Lachs, 2011).

Campbell and Slaughter (1999) believed some of the tensions, whether between faculty members or between faculty and the administration, are “related to intellectual property...” (p. 328). Faculty whose research leads to more monetary success for themselves and the college are vilified by their peers in other disciplines, who see the dollar supplanting the collegial spirit of

the faculty (Campbell & Slaughter, 1999). The research of Campbell and Slaughter (1999) also showed that faculty who were not involved in working with outside agencies on patentable research were skeptical of their administrators' ability to distribute resources equitably, especially in poor economic conditions. Campbell and Slaughter (1999) said that the faculty who are not involved in patentable research believe that the entire faculty body would no longer be a committed group working together and worry that a rift would divide the faculty, "undermining [their] collective strength and further eroding their professional status" (p. 347).

Much of the research indicated that there is passivity around faculty engagement in shared governance. The literature included several calls for faculty to reconnect with the decision-making process at their respective institutions (Gerber, 2014; Johnston, 2003; Lewis, 2011; Minor, 2004; Morpew, 1999; Tinberg, 2009). Tinberg (2009), a faculty member herself, appealed to college faculty and asked them to re-engage in the shared governance process, writing "colleges are not democracies, but participatory decision-making should remain one of our most important institutional values. Participation demands practice and ongoing attention, and we are sorely out of shape" (p. 10).

The literature also considered how faculty members who move into the administrative arena are sometimes seen as turncoats by their former teaching colleagues. Faculty who make the leap from instructor to administrator are viewed with suspicion by their former colleagues (Bray, 2008; Campbell & Slaughter, 1999) because "academic administrators over time shift toward an administrative perspective on issues" (Bray, 2008, p. 693). Dill (1984) remarked that the unique traits of faculty who become administrators make them important to study as a group, because many of them wish to continue their teaching and research responsibilities while taking on administrative roles and have received little training as managers. However, 15 years later,

Campbell and Slaughter's (1999) research recognized faculty joining the administration seldom return to teaching. Bray (2010) found that faculty question those who leave their ranks and criticize their ascension in administration and noted that this topic has not been fully explored and warrants attention.

### **Administrators' Perceptions**

**How administrators perceive faculty.** There has been little research done on administrators' perceptions of faculty. Campbell and Slaughter's (1999) research on the relationships between universities and corporations, however, provided some insight into how administrators view faculty. As the government becomes more involved in oversight and assessment of colleges and universities and holds administrators accountable for the college, administrators may start to view themselves as responsible for the actions of their faculty, just as managers think that they are responsible to the corporation for the actions of their subordinates (Campbell & Slaughter, 1999). Campbell and Slaughter (1999) noted that this attitude might make more and more administrators look to the business world for guidance in dealing with employees.

Gentry, Katz, and McFeeter's (2009) research supported the idea that as administrators build their interpersonal skills, they help their faculty leaders see the administrator as a more complete person, rather than an adversary and vice versa. In the results of his survey, Schmidt (2013) shared:

The chief academic officers who responded to the survey tended, in the written comments, to place the blame for tensions on individual players and on inherent differences in perspective. 'Faculty protect programs. Administrators protect the

institution. That is the root cause of all conflict,' wrote an academic vice president from a private university in the Midwest. (para. 39)

Schmidt's (2013) study helped to explain how administrators view the external influences on colleges and universities in comparison to their faculty colleagues. Rosser (2003) said that administrators will need to evaluate their college's effectiveness using outcomes such as fundraising, nurturing legislative relationships, students' graduation rates, and career placement rates of graduates in order to help determine overall college performance. Middlehurst (2004) acknowledged that colleges employing the complex systems based on more bureaucratic infrastructures must have leaders (people) who acknowledge and address the challenges (processes) head-on, working with faculty to help them grow along with the institutional mission.

**How administrators perceive themselves.** It is important to note how administrators view their roles in academia. Whetten and Cameron (1985), using research from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), discussed the following eight principles to help define what it means to be an effective higher education administrator: 1) emphasizes the importance of not only the results, but how the results are achieved; 2) is willing to take risks and is not afraid of failure; 3) knows how to cultivate strategic partnerships; 4) is not too easily influenced—listens and reflects thoughtfully; 5) makes his or her mark; 6) communicates often and openly, especially during the hard times (Austin, 1990); 7) considers well the importance of the campus constituent groups; and 8) supports what is best-loved about an institution, even if it means sacrificing elsewhere. These roles and responsibilities help to distinguish effective administrators from average or poor leaders. Administrators who follow

these principles view themselves as being successful in their jobs and help ease the tensions in their relationships with faculty (Whetten & Cameron, 1985).

College and university administrative leaders need to reconcile the requirements and wishes of the communities they serve with the demands of external influences on the institution. The task of administrators is not only to make sure that the college faculty are meeting the needs of the community; it is also essential that they make sure the faculty's needs are met (Birnbaum, 1988). Gentry et al. (2009) explored how college and university administrators can prevent "burnout" in their positions, which has significant consequences on the campus, including the faculty and students as well as co-administrators. While faculty face the complex task of meeting the expectations set by themselves and their administrators, so too, does the administrator have a responsibility to his or her faculty and staff (Birnbaum, 1988; Gentry et al., 2009; Morpew, 1999).

Not only must the dean be adept at hiring and retaining high quality professors (Bray, 2008; Matczynski, Lasley, and Haberman, (1989), he or she is also expected to be able to deal with the various stakeholders, listening to all sides objectively and resolving any issues among the constituent groups (Matczynski et al., 1989). Additionally, it is imperative college administrators be effective at setting goals for the institution and at the same time be mindful of the various stakeholders who "each claim a legitimate right to influence" them (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 18). Successful administrators are those who reflect on their mistakes and use them to help improve their work and cultivate new strengths for solving potential future problems (Gentry et al., 2009; Whetten & Cameron, 1985).

## **Conclusion**

Though the relationships between college faculty and administrators have a tradition of being contentious, there are potential ways to resolve some of the conflict. As in any relationship, communication is the key to success or failure. As the pressures from governmental and outside bodies increase, colleges have to consider new ways to assess their institutional missions and viability.

Bringing together these two critical constituent groups has always been important to colleges using a shared model of governance, but will prove vital if these pressures increase. In college, there is an emphasis on the diverse body of experience in which students can find value; in learning how to think critically and reflectively. Extending this beyond the classroom to faculty and administration will benefit the college. These groups should be willing to acknowledge each other's strengths, meeting in the same room to face their institutions' challenges, and address the needs of their colleges and universities in the best ways possible.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

I was curious to understand why tensions exist between faculty and administration and created a research question to help me explore the phenomenon of what it is like to be a faculty member at an institution using shared governance. Ray (1994) wrote:

Phenomenology relates to the question, “How do we know?” It is epistemological inquiry into and commitment to describing and clarifying the essential structure of the lived world of conscious experience by reflexively meditating on the origins of experience.

Thus the essence of a thing as it “is meant,” ...is revealed. (pp. 118-119)

The purpose of this heuristic phenomenological study was to describe and reflect upon the experiences of nine tenured faculty members from three different post-secondary institutions using a shared governance model. The sub-questions of my study were: what are these professors’ perceptions of their relationships with college leadership in the context of their perceived roles and responsibilities in the shared governance structure; how do these perceptions influence their engagement in shared governance; and how has their engagement in shared governance influenced their perceptions of their relationships with administrators?

#### **Overview of Methodology—Approach and Rationale**

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) wrote that both qualitative and quantitative research require “disciplined data collection” (p. 4) but encouraged the use of qualitative methods when the study was concerned with determining how people make sense of their lives. Creswell (2013) noted that narrative research “begins with the experiences as expressed in lived and told stories of individuals” (p. 70) and it is the researcher’s role to analyze and explain these stories.



There appeared to be a lack of qualitative research on this topic and this study helped to fill that gap. This study contributed to the literature on the relationships between college faculty and administrators by looking at the lived experiences of faculty members to better understand the tensions that may exist between these two groups. These tensions may have a negative effect on outcomes for students and other stakeholders. Learning what causes these tensions may help provide means to resolve them and improve outcomes for members of the university community, especially students and other stakeholders. This study also sought to situate these relationships within colleges that use a shared model of governance.

This study attempted to understand the lived experiences of faculty, which called for a qualitative, phenomenological approach. Qualitative research is “an approach to social science research that emphasizes collecting descriptive data in natural settings, uses inductive thinking, and emphasizes understanding the subject’s point of view,” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 274). Because of the inductive process of qualitative studies, Agee (2009) contended that “qualitative questions should invite a process of exploration and discovery” (p. 434) and qualitative research allows for deeper investigation into the lived experience (Agee, 2009; Creswell, 2013; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Spiegelberg (1982) wrote that the primary objective of the phenomenological approach is to amplify the “immediate experience” (p. 656) with the phenomenon and fully investigate it.

Creswell (2014) said that qualitative research includes “emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively built from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data” (p. 4). After the data collection and analysis, this study aimed to provide a rich narrative description of the research participants’ experiences working in a shared governance

environment. Additionally, just as creative writers try to tell compelling stories or write thought-provoking poetry starting from personal experiences and moving out to larger human experiences, Clandinin and Connolly (2000) shared that qualitative research is:

...a telling of ourselves, this meeting of ourselves in the past through inquiry, [and] makes clear that as inquirers we, too, are part of the parade. We have helped make the world in which we find ourselves. We are not merely objective inquirers, people on the high road, who study a world lesser in quality than our moral temperament would have it, people who study a world we did not help create. On the contrary, we are complicit in the world we study. Being in this world, we need to remake ourselves as well as offer up research understandings that could lead to a better world. (p. 61)

Finally, van Manen (2014) also suggested that researchers who use phenomenological methods challenge themselves to inspire in their readers the same curiosity about the subject being explored.

### **Methodological Approach**

There are two focusing or narrowing elements of heuristic inquiry within the larger framework of phenomenology. First, the researcher *must* have personal experience with and intense interest in the phenomenon under study. Second, others (participants) who are a part of the study must share *an intensity* of experience with the phenomenon. (Patton, 1990, p. 71)

I chose to use a heuristic phenomenological approach to this study because the focus of this type of approach “is exclusively and continually aimed at understanding human experience” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 19). Van Manen (2014) wrote that “Phenomenology, in its multiple contemporary manifestations and historical orientations, continues to make us mindful to be

critically and philosophically aware of how our lives (and our cognitive, emotional, embody, and tacit understandings) are socially, culturally, politically, and existentially fashioned” (p. 13). In doing a heuristic phenomenological research study, I hoped to gain deeper, richer personal insights into the lived experiences of the participants.

Van Manen (2014) wrote that phenomenological research often starts with one’s own familiarity with a phenomenon and this study developed from my own observations of the tensions I saw between faculty and administrators. However, Douglass and Moustakas (1985) drew distinctions between heuristic phenomenology and phenomenology that helped to guide this research study. As a heuristic researcher, 1) I attempted to emphasize my connectedness and relationship to the study; 2) I attempted to portray “essential meanings” derived from the data; 3) I provided a *creative synthesis* of the experiences; 4) I represented the research participants as individuals, retaining not only the essence of their experiences, but attempting to retain the essence of their personhood as well (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985).

Heuristics demands that the researcher stay engaged in the process, not just during the data collection phase, but also afterwards. Not only was this an observation of faculty and administrators’ relationships, but also a caution for myself as the primary researcher of this study. Moustakas (1994) shared:

The research participants remain close to depictions of their experience, telling their individual stories with increasing understanding and insight. The depictions themselves achieve layers of depth and meaning through the interactions, explorations, and elucidations that occur between the primary researcher and the other research participants. The life experience of the heuristic researcher and the research participants

is not a text to be read or interpreted, but a comprehensive story that is portrayed in vivid, alive, accurate, and meaningful language. (p. 19)

I believed connecting with the data through the research study allowed me deeper insights into the lived experiences of the faculty who served as participants in this study and, through constant deliberation, I was able to ascertain relevant themes. Douglass and Moustakas (1985) wrote about the importance of the reflection process in heuristic inquiry and suggested that from it, the researcher could draw a more complete picture.

### **Theoretical Framework**

While the role of theory in phenomenology is viewed as somewhat controversial (Ray, 1994), Butin (2010) suggested that identifying a theoretical framework helps to guide the research and helps to “expose and unravel the assumptions and implications that go with ‘of course’ seeing the world in a certain way” (p. 60). Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasized that it is important in naturalistic inquiry to acknowledge and understand the influence of values. It is the responsibility of the researcher to reveal and explain this influence through constant reflection (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ray, 1994). In choosing both the theoretical framework and methodology selected for this study, I hoped to match what I wanted to know about the lived experience of faculty members, and I acknowledged and recognized the choices as decisions influencing the research (Braun & Clark, 2006).

In determining which theoretical framework would best serve this heuristic phenomenological research study, I examined several options before selecting social constructivism. Creswell (2014) noted that constructivism is often used as an approach in qualitative research and the term is used interchangeably with “social constructivism” and “interpretivism.” Interpretivism assumes truth is a social construct, similarly to constructivism

and social constructivism, and one of its research goals is to examine “patterns of meaning” (Butin, 2010, p. 59). Creswell (2014) said that “These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas” (p. 8). This is one of the reasons why it seemed like a natural partner with heuristic research, which expects the participants will provide their multiple meanings to allow the researcher “to depict the experience in its many aspects or folding into core themes and essences” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 6).

Crotty (1998) said that constructivism focuses epistemological considerations “exclusively on ‘the meaning-making activity of the individual mind’” (p. 58). This idea of an individual’s meaning-making is essential to recognize at the start of heuristic research. Moustakas (1990) wrote that “One’s own self-discoveries, awarenesses, and understandings are the initial steps of the process” of heuristic study (p. 16).

### **Philosophical Assumptions and Research Design**

Spiegelberg (1982) wrote that, “Phenomenology begins in silence,” (p. 672) and Ray (1994) emphasized the need for ample reflection during the research process. Regarding heuristic phenomenological studies, Moustakas (1990) discussed six phases guiding the research and called for extended periods of reflection or “indwelling” to help illuminate the themes as they emerge from the data. The six phases of heuristic research “are the initial engagement, immersion into the topic in question, incubation, illumination, explication, and culmination of the research in a creative synthesis” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 27).

The first phase, *initial engagement*, which Moustakas (1990) noted is the period of determining the topic of interest, occurred during my “coming to the question.” I engaged in significant reading and study of the literature dealing with faculty and administrators’

perceptions of themselves, each other, and their institutions' use of shared governance. I also observed what was and is currently taking place at many colleges around the country through reading articles in periodicals and the comments made by other readers. It is important to note I also witnessed tensions at my previous institutions, which I address later in the paper as a part of my bias statement.

The second phase of heuristic research, *immersion into the topic*, concerned data collection and how “Virtually anything connected with the question becomes raw material for immersion, for staying with, and for maintaining a sustained focus and concentration” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 28). During this phase I continued to read and each day began by reading the *Chronicle of Higher Education* to find articles related to faculty governance. Additionally, I kept a journal to note my observations and any potential themes. Douglass & Moustakas (1985) noted that in heuristic research, data vary widely and data collection techniques include traditional methods as well as non-traditional methods that may occur spontaneously as a result of “the dynamic nature of subjective reality” (pp. 48-49). One non-traditional method of data collection I utilized, with very limited results, was to request brief reflections from the research participants about their in-depth interviews, to be emailed to me a week after the interviews concluded.

After immersion, the next phase, *incubation*, necessitated that I avoid directly gathering data, reading, talking with people, and other circumstances possibly contributing to the “understanding of the phenomenon” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 28). This period of *incubation* allowed me to meditate on the collected data and for aspects of the phenomenon to surface (Moustakas, 1990).

The fourth phase, *illumination*, relied on the *incubation* phase. The illumination period was the time in which themes emerged naturally because I sought to remain “open and receptive to tacit knowledge and intuition. The illumination, as such, [was] a breakthrough into conscious awareness of qualities and a clustering of qualities into themes inherent in the question” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 29). Next, during the fifth phase, called *explication*, I was immersed in the data and “concentrated attention [was] given to creating an inward space and discovering nuances, textures, and constituents of the phenomenon which [became] more fully elucidated through indwelling” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 31). It was also important for me to be mindful of my own biases and opinions during this period so that I was aware of how my beliefs shaped my understanding of the data collected (Moustakas, 1990).

Moustakas (1990) wrote that in the final process of heuristic phenomenological research—the *creative synthesis*—it was important for me to fully ascertain “the material that [illuminated and explicated] the question” before unifying “the components and core themes into a creative synthesis” (pp. 31-32). *Creative synthesis* includes tacit knowing and intuition (Moustakas, 1990). Polanyi (1969) explained that tacit knowledge is knowledge that is difficult to explain but through extensive interaction and engagement with a topic, the researcher can begin to gain the knowledge needed for understanding. This contrasts with explicit knowledge, which is factual knowledge (for example, that Des Moines is the state capitol of Iowa).

Polanyi (1969) noted that it was important to be aware that “The conflict between the view that denotative language bears on objects and the classical view, which holds that language bears on conceptions” can be resolved “by admitting both possibilities and establishing a continuous transition between the two” (p. 190). Heuristic research, said Moustakas (1990), asks that the researcher take the time to move back and forth between thematizing the data and

periods of reflection until she believes she has synthesized the lived experiences and can accurately portray the phenomenon. As I moved between *immersion* and *incubation*, it was important to honor the time commitment such a process involved as well as to create a physical space free of distractions.

### **Participants and Sampling**

Creswell (2013) suggested that phenomenological studies should examine a minimum of three and a maximum of fifteen individuals “who have all experienced the phenomenon” (p. 78). Additionally, qualitative research relies on thick, rich descriptions which provide insights to give researchers a more complete picture of what they are studying (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Seidman (2006) warned of saturation however, so it is also necessary for qualitative researchers to understand when they have reached the point at which they have enough information. Heuristic inquiry relies heavily on the researcher reflecting on the coding process. As I collected data, took field notes, and conducted and transcribed interviews, it was important to be mindful of recurring themes and I made note of them.

A combination of sampling techniques were used in determining the participants in this research study. Creswell (2013) described maximum variation sampling as a common sampling technique used in qualitative research and wrote:

This approach consists of determining in advance some criteria that differentiate the sites or participants, and then selecting sites or participants that are quite different on the criteria. This approach is often selected because when a researcher maximizes differences at the beginning of the study, it increases the likelihood that the findings will reflect differences or different perspectives—an ideal in qualitative research. (p. 156-157)



This is consistent with a purposive sampling technique, which is a process whereby the researcher chooses “subjects, places, and other dimensions of a research site to include in the research to enlarge your analysis or to test particular emerging themes and working hypotheses” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 274).

Patton (1990) wrote that when individuals are the unit of analysis, “the primary focus of data collection will be on what is happening to individuals in a setting and how individuals are affected by the setting” (pp. 166-167). Since this was a phenomenological study, the units of analysis were individuals and their lived experience with a phenomenon. The units of analysis in my research study were tenured faculty members at three different post-secondary institutions in the Midwest. Since the research dealt with faculty experiences in a shared governance environment, it was important to me the participants had leadership experience. Several of the participants had served as department or division chairs, some had also served as representatives to their Faculty Councils, and all had served on a variety of committees. I confirmed, through reviewing faculty handbooks at each of the institutions, that the participants’ colleges used a shared governance model of decision-making. Only tenured faculty were selected as participants. Institutions were not considered if their governing documents did not demonstrate, at least on paper, the existence of a shared governance environment. Additionally, I did not choose any faculty whom I knew, nor any who were from an institution where I have studied, worked, am working, or currently seeking employment.

I made initial contacts with research participants through my professional colleagues. I sent an email to 15 colleagues soliciting from them the names of potential research participants whom they could recommend to me for the study. In the email, I provided a list of nine small private liberal arts colleges in the Midwest I had pre-selected as institutions that use the shared

governance model of decision-making. As I heard back from them with the names of individuals, aside from thanking them for their replies, I made no indication to my colleagues that I followed up with any of their leads, in an effort to increase the confidentiality of the study.

Though I knew I wanted all of the faculty members to have tenure status and leadership experience, using maximum variation sampling, I was able to achieve the variety I wanted in other areas. It was important to me, and consistent with maximum variation sampling, to have research participants who represented different academic disciplines, different years of service, and different faculty rank. At two institutions, I used a gatekeeper in order to select all of the research participants, and they were instrumental in connecting me with other faculty members they believed would be suitable and interested in participating in the research (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2013). Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 28, as cited in Creswell, 2013) describe snowball or chain sampling as getting contacts who can identify “cases of interest from people who know people who know what cases are information-rich” (Creswell, 2013, p. 158). At a third institution, I had received three different names of potential research participants, all of whom agreed to participate in the study.

In order to build trust with the faculty at each institution, I took several opportunities to discuss the measures I put in place to increase their anonymity and provide more confidentiality to the study. I provided all of the potential participants with the informed consent document and time to reflect on it. In addition, throughout the study, it was important to me to emphasize and explain to the research participants the variety of ways I anticipated increasing the anonymity of the research participants and the institutions. This was also a subject I discussed several times with my dissertation advisor, talking through ideas on ways to anonymize the research and how it may influence the reading of the study.

## **Data Collection Procedures**

I used general qualitative methods in this inquiry such as semi-structured face-to-face interviews, coding, and thematic analysis. Semi-structured interviewing allowed for follow-up questions expanding and clarifying participant responses (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Kvale, 1996). It is recommended that researchers employ three interviews as a part of collecting the data appropriate for phenomenological research (Moustakas, 1990; Patton, 1990; Seidman, 2006). These interviews were my primary source of data collection. I interviewed each participant at least three times, following Patton's (1990) descriptions of interview techniques:

- 1) The first interview was a forty-five minute semi-formal phone interview that relied on a natural exchange of ideas to generate additional questions and topics to consider for the research study.
- 2) The second interview was a general interview guide outlining a set of questions to be explored with participants. This was emailed to each participant ahead of the third interview.
- 3) The semi-structured open-ended interview was third and included questions all research participants were asked. The questions were purposeful and consistently asked of all participants. These interviews lasted for approximately one hour.

While it was not necessary to conduct follow-up interviews, I received follow-up emails with additional information from several of the participants following transcription reviews as well as requests for participant reflections. As suggested by Seidman (2006), all of the interviews were at a site convenient to the participants.

Participant responses were digitally recorded and I also took some field notes during the interviews. Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended researchers "consider both the degree of

fidelity and the degree of structure that will be useful and viable at each stage of the inquiry” (p. 241). Recorded interviews via a digital audio-recorder provided a high level of “fidelity” and field notes offered a “structure” to allow me the convenience of revisiting earlier points made during the interview and addressing nonverbal expressions made by the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Also, I took the time for considerable periods of reflection as a part of the heuristic phenomenological process and I maintained a journal of personal observations and reflections during the collection process. It had been my hope to collect additional documents, such as faculty council minutes, departmental meeting minutes, etc., to support the research. However, I was only able to successfully secure the meeting minutes for one committee. In general, the research participants were hesitant to provide minutes to the meetings of the faculty, faculty councils, and other committees. Often, participants shared that their institutions, or they themselves, believed the documents to be internal and not to be shared outside of their college communities. I was able to download and review each of the colleges’ faculty handbooks from their main Web pages, and confirmed access to meeting minutes were only accessible through the institutions’ intranets.

As primary researcher, I transcribed my own tapes into Word documents. In order to maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms were used after the initial review of the transcriptions by the participants. No identifying characteristics are included in the reporting of the study. A master list of pseudonyms was maintained on a password-protected computer. Data was kept on a password-protected computer; any hard copies of collected documents were kept in a locked filing cabinet. Raw data (audio-recordings) will be deleted upon completion of the study. Hard copy, electronic, and all other forms of data will be stored for the required three years following analysis/project completion, and then will be completely destroyed.

Additionally, as the researcher, I needed to be aware of ethical issues and planned for them in the design of this study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Seidman, 2006). Creswell (2013) emphasized that researchers need to be aware of issues “...especially during data collection with respect for the site and the participants, and gathering data in ways that will not create power imbalances and ‘use’ the participants” (p. 65). It is critical the researcher communicates clearly with the participants, from the request for an interview to the final review of a transcript (Creswell, 2013; Seidman, 2006).

I triangulated the research using both field notes and a journal, as well as faculty handbooks. (Anfara et al., 2002; Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990; Wolcott, 2009). However, in keeping with confidentiality protocols (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Seidman, 2006), all identifying remarks were removed, participants were randomly assigned gender, and participants and their colleges were given pseudonyms.

After the dissertation proposal defense and upon approval of my dissertation committee, the necessary paperwork was submitted to Drake University’s Institutional Review Board. I completed the National Institute of Health’s Web-based training course, *Protecting Human Research Participants*, on January 27, 2013. As discussed previously and in order to meet ethical research guidelines, every attempt was made to protect the privacy and confidentiality of participants. Each participant was notified of the risks and benefits of the research study through an informed consent document as well as through the initial contact and first meeting with each person. I also asked for and discussed any questions or concerns participants had at the end of interviews.

The attached informed consent document identifies this as a project through Drake University. It outlines data collection procedures, participant confidentiality, risks to the

participant, the researcher's contact information, and the rights of the participant. These rights included the ability to withdraw at any time with no penalty and the destruction of data if they chose to withdraw. The consent document also included spaces for date and signature. I have digital copies saved onto a password-protected computer as well as hard copies stored in a locked filing cabinet. Additionally, I added Drake University's Approved IRB Protocol Number to the informed consent document after it was approved and before it was sent to the potential research participants.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

Generally, analysis is "the process of sorting, arranging, coding, and in other ways looking for patterns in data for the purpose of coming up with findings" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 271). Patton (1990) acknowledged that the purpose of heuristic phenomenological analysis is to reveal the essence of an experience of a phenomenon for an individual or group. This study attempted to elucidate the essence of the lived experience of faculty who work at colleges that use a shared model of governance. Moustakas (1990) said:

Heuristics is a way of engaging in scientific search for methods and processes aimed at discovery; a way of self-inquiry and dialogue with others aimed at finding underlying meanings of important human experiences. The deepest currents of meaning and knowledge take place within the individual through one's senses, perceptions, beliefs, and judgments. This requires a passionate, disciplined commitment to remain with a question intensely and continuously until it is illuminated or answered. (p. 15)

In addition to this constant commitment to the question, the researcher attempted to engage with the six phases of heuristic research described earlier in this paper: "initial engagement,

immersion into the topic in question, incubation, illumination, explication, and culmination of the research in a creative synthesis” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 27).

### **Initial engagement.**

The purpose of qualitative inquiry is to produce findings. The challenge is to make sense of massive amounts of data, reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns, and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal. (Patton, 1990, pp. 371-372)

My initial engagement with the topic of my study, faculty and administrator relationships in a shared governance environment, comes out of my own familiarity with the subject. The purpose of phenomenological research is to describe the experience individuals have with a phenomenon, while also recognizing one’s own perspectives on it through bracketing (Moustakas, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1989). As I learned more about phenomenological research, it seemed a natural methodology to use so I could not only attempt to understand the lived experience of faculty but also acknowledged my own perceptions so that I could come to the research and collect data with an “open mind,” to determine meanings and structures as they emerged. Polkinghorne (1989) wrote that phenomenological research “seeks understanding for its own sake” (p. 58) and that, in order to be successful, the research should provide more clarity and understanding of what it is like for one to experience the phenomenon under study. My goal for this research was to produce a unified picture of this clarity and understanding by offering thick, rich descriptions of evidence presented in the data.

Patton (1990) said, “The first step in phenomenological analysis is that of *Epoché*” (p. 407). *Epoché* is the process by which researchers identify their preconceived assumptions (Patton, 1990) which helps with bracketing, when researchers address those “assumptions” they

bring to the topic (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Ray, 1994; Creswell, 2013; Crotty, 1998; Moustakas, 1990; Patton, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1989; van Manen, 2014). As Dwyer and Buckle (2009) noted, “qualitative researchers...are not separate from the study, with limited contact with our participants. Instead, we are firmly in all aspects of the research process and essential to it” (p. 61). As such, bracketing is not only an initial step in the analysis process, but a technique to employ throughout the study (Patton, 1990). While I tried to maintain my objectivity in analyzing the findings of my research, it was valuable to note my positionality and I have provided a bias statement later in this chapter.

During the heuristic phenomenological research, the researcher employed the strategy and steps for qualitative analysis that included three phases to the analysis of the data, horizontalization, thematizing, and textural/structural synthesis (Moustakas, 1994). As I began my research, I recorded themes in my journal. This type of informal analysis is typical in qualitative research to capture initial impressions of emerging themes.

**Horizontalization of textural descriptions or immersion and incubation.** During the first phase, horizontalization, it was important that I spent time with the data, identifying data units, generating a list of what was interesting about the data, and using codes to signify the meaning units (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 1990). Stones (1988) described meaning units as singular, distinguishable statements or phrases made by a participant about his or her experience (as cited in Pietersen, 2002). I digitally recorded the interviews of the participants, after gaining their permission, and transcribed all of the interviews. In conversation with my advisor, I decided it was important to transcribe the interviews myself, which fostered a more intimate review of the data and heightened my awareness of themes as they emerged.



After each interview, I used a software program called Dragon NaturallySpeaking, allowing me to dictate the interviews into a Word document. I listened to the interviews and reviewed the transcriptions twice to check for accuracy. Additionally, I sent their transcripts to each of the research participants, and asked them to review the transcript, and provide any adjustments they wished to. I believe the time spent transcribing the interviews provided me a greater depth and breadth of understanding of the data units. Braun and Clark (2006) said that researchers should not only read and re-read the data, but ought to also begin to take notes during this phase of the research, identifying codes they can return to later in the study. This corresponds with the *immersion into the topic in question* and *incubation* stages, which are important to heuristic phenomenological research. It is a crucial step, because it lays the foundation for the rest of the study (Braun and Clark, 2006).

Finally, I noted in my journal what was interesting about the data and started to develop a coding system to identify emerging patterns in the meaning units (common phrases; repeated events; words; etc.) during this horizontalization process. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) wrote that turning patterns into coding categories allows the collected descriptive data to be separated from each other and is a “crucial step in data analysis” (p. 173). Van Manen (2014) noted that “reduction is not simply a research method, it also describes the phenomenological attitude and the reflective gestures of the vocative that must be adopted by anyone who wishes to participate in the questions that a certain project requires” (p. 221).

While initially I anticipated collecting my coded data into Microsoft Excel, after meeting with my dissertation committee, I researched and purchased a qualitative analysis software program called NVivo. The software allowed me the flexibility to work with the data in a much more comprehensive manner. Though I had to spend time learning the new software, the NVivo

program had several features that gave me an opportunity to evaluate the strength of the themes I identified, including identifying frequency of words, creating word trees, coding queries, and comparing the data among the three institutions. Additionally the software's ease-of-use allowed me to review the transcriptions and code the data quickly and efficiently. Also, I was able to examine the coded data and merge or separate the themes easily.

**Thematizing—the structures of the experience or illumination and explication.** The second phase was thematizing. Analyzing themes concerns identifying meaning structures shared by participants about their lived experience of the phenomenon (van Manen, 2014). Thematizing involves grouping invariant constituents (the horizons of the experience) into thematic labels (Moustakas, 1994; Braun & Clark, 2006). As part of this process, I provided thematic descriptions in my own words, borne out of the participants' original language given in the raw data (Polkinghorne, 1989). Van Manen (2014) asserted:

Too often, theme analysis is understood as an unambiguous and fairly mechanical application of some frequency count or coding of significant terms and transcripts, or some other breakdown of the content of protocol or documentary material. But “analyzing” thematic meanings of a phenomenon (the lived experience) is a complex and creative process of insightful invention, discovery, and disclosure. In exploring themes and insights, we can treat texts as sources of meaning at the level of the whole story; at the level of the separate paragraph; and at the level of the sentence, phrase, expression, or single word. (2014, pp. 319-320)

Polkinghorne (1989) explained that this process is not accomplished by technical procedure as it is in quantitative analysis, such as the transformation of a group of raw scores into standard deviation and mean scores, but rather requires the linguistic capacity to understand the meaning

of statements (p. 52). I utilized the three approaches to developing thematic statements van Manen (2014) suggested and included 1) a critical but complete look at the themes to understand the general meaning of the data; 2) a more discerning approach focusing on data units (in the form of sentences or phrases) emerging from the material; and 3) a comprehensive examination of the data, using a line-by-line approach. This process was made much more efficient by the use of the NVivo software.

The approaches I utilized as a part of the data analysis supported the constructivist theoretical framework. Braun and Clark (2006) wrote that “thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data” (p. 5). Specifically, thematic analysis provides a way for the primary researcher to show how the participants construct and make meaning of the phenomenon being studied by recognizing and identifying the patterns that emerge within the data (Braun and Clark, 2006). Crotty (1998) said that phenomenological research is about studying “*what we directly experience*; that is, the objects of our experience before we start thinking about them, interpreting them or attributing any meaning to them. These are the *things themselves*” (p. 79). Since constructivism is concerned with how people construct their own, individual, meanings for what they learn, using van Manen’s structure for analyzing themes provided a purposeful approach to the process because I had to deeply and subjectively consider the meaning-making of the participants.

As a part of the heuristic phenomenological approach, Moustakas (1994) encouraged researchers to spend time with the material and reflect on the themes which emerge. The periods of *illumination* and *explication* were important during the thematizing stage. I relied on my advisor as a “sounding board” or “critical friend” to provide me feedback on the themes as they

developed. As suggested by Moustakas (1994), after each approach to developing thematic statements, I also took the time to reflect upon them as a part of the *indwelling* called for in heuristic phenomenological studies. This period of explication and illumination was a critical step in this heuristic phenomenological research.

**Textural-structural synthesis or creative synthesis.** Finally, I employed textural-structural synthesis, which integrated the textural and structural description into an account representing the group as a whole. In this phase, it was important to provide the reader with an understanding of the subject and demonstrate its validity (Braun & Clark, 2006). Douglass and Moustakas (1985) wrote:

The concept of intentionality is pertinent in realization to synthesis. In moving from the specific to the general, from the individual to the universal, from appearance to essence, the theme, question, or problem being explored is recognized as having a life of its own.  
(p. 52)

This process of textural-structural synthesis corresponded to the sixth and last phase of heuristic phenomenological research, *creative synthesis*, which required me to integrate “all of the depictions and portraits and personal knowledge of the experience” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 19).

Braun and Clark (2006) suggested using clear and “vivid examples, or extracts which capture the essence of the point” (p. 23) being made in the synthesis. As I coded and re-coded the themes, I also marked the meaning units that were most compelling and provided the strongest portrayals of the essence of the experience. These textural descriptions were integrated with the structural analysis and I relied on my personal experience, my understanding of the data, and my ability to accurately reflect in the writing the lived experiences of the faculty participants. I

believed it was important to also request my advisor's help as a sounding board to assist me in this phase of writing up the narrative.

I also attempted to validate my analysis through what Patton (1990) calls a pragmatic validation, which "means that the perspective presented is judged by its relevance to and use by those to whom it is presented: *their* perspective and actions joined to the evaluator's perspective and actions" (p. 485). I provided the transcripts to the participants to confirm with them that the data I started with accurately reflected what they had shared, and encouraged them in my emails to let me know if they accepted, wanted to expand upon, or disagreed with the transcripts. Polkinghorne (1989) encouraged the researcher to ask "How do my descriptive results compare with your experiences?" and "Have any aspects of your experience been omitted?" (p. 53). Through providing the participants an opportunity to provide this feedback, I believe I have helped increase the credibility of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The goal of my analysis was to examine the data as described by Douglass and Moustakas (1985):

The challenge is to examine all the collected data in creative combinations and re-combinations, sifting and sorting, moving rhythmically in and out of appearance, looking, listening carefully for the meanings within meanings, attempting to identify the overarching qualities that inhere in the data. This is a quest for synthesis through realization of what lies most undeniably at the heart of all that has been discovered. Synthesis goes beyond distillation of themes and patterns. It is not a summary or recapitulation. In synthesis, the searcher is challenged to generate a new reality, a new monolithic significance that embodies the essence of the heuristic truth. (p. 52)

In the end, the analysis sought to grasp the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience (Patton, 2002) of faculty who work at colleges that use a shared governance model of institutional governance.

### **Design Issues**

Addressing the quality and rigor of a qualitative research study is important, but Krefting (1991) emphasized that it is crucial to “ensure rigor without sacrificing the relevance of the qualitative research” (p. 174). While there is conflict between how qualitative and quantitative studies approach basic epistemological and ontological assumptions, several researchers, including Anfara, Brown, & Mangione (2002); Johnson (1997); and Lincoln and Guba (1985) have offered suggestions of how to improve the methods and data analysis, make the data more widely available, and evaluate the research on how it adds to the body of existing studies (Anfara et al., 2002; Johnson, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Qualitative research is assessed by looking at the trustworthiness of the study, which is done by looking at several factors, including the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the research (Anfara et al., 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). McEwan and McEwan (2003) stated, “the critical question is the degree to which precise rules of research procedure and inference are applied to the design of the study and the interpretation of the data” (p. 20). It is important to the research to address issues of trustworthiness and the following provides more detail on how I dealt with it in my phenomenological study.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) wrote, “No single item of information (unless coming from an elite and unimpeachable source) should ever be given serious consideration unless it can be triangulated” (p. 283). Anfara et al. (2002) suggested that “although triangulation, member checks, and other qualitative strategies are mentioned frequently” (p. 29) in qualitative studies,

the researchers should provide evidence as to how exactly this was accomplished. As discussed in the section on data collection, I triangulated the research using field notes, my journal, and faculty handbooks. As I said, only one faculty member was comfortable sharing the committee meeting minutes of one committee on which they had served previously. Also, the use of multiple interviews helped to triangulate the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation is employed as a part of several criteria used to assess the quality and rigor of qualitative studies, including credibility, dependability, and confirmability (Anfara et al., 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), which, along with transferability, are discussed below.

**Credibility.** One of the characteristics of heuristic research, a lengthy engagement during data collection, is also a strategy for determining credibility of the research (Anfara et al., 2002; Seidman, 2006). The semi-structured interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed to ensure dependability by “creating an audit trail” (Anfara et al., 2002, p. 30). Credibility of the research can be checked by making certain the responses were indeed the participants’ and not the researcher’s. After I completed the transcript, I sent it to the participants who had an opportunity to review and clarify the transcripts, providing a member check (Creswell, 2013; Anfara et al., 2002). Patton (1990) wrote that “because the researcher is the instrument in qualitative inquiry, a qualitative report must include information about the researcher” (p. 472). This critical self-reflection added to the credibility of the research and I wrote a bias statement in which I share my perspectives on the subject of faculty and administrator relationships as well as my personal experience with the topic.

**Transferability.** While in quantitative research, external validity is determined by random sampling and generalizability, in qualitative research, transferability is required for trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The strategy of writing thick descriptions and using

purposive sampling provided evidence of transferability (Anfara et al., 2002). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that using purposive sampling will allow for “the widest possible range of information for inclusion in the thick description” (p. 316). Additionally, Lincoln and Guba (1985) wrote:

The best advice to give to anyone seeking to make a transfer is to accumulate *empirical* evidence about contextual similarity; the responsibility of the original investigator ends in providing sufficient descriptive data to make such similarity judgments possible. (p. 298)

I employed multiple variation sampling techniques, including selecting a variety of participants and sites to include in the research design, as well as conveyed the collected data using vivid portraits and thick, rich descriptions in order to demonstrate transferability.

**Dependability.** Lincoln and Guba (1985) maintained that establishing credibility is helpful to ascertain dependability but it is not enough. This study also employed the three phases of the data analysis which used a code-recode strategy to increase the dependability of the research (Anfara et al., 2002). As previously mentioned, I also asked for feedback from my advisor, who served as a “critical friend” in examining the different iterations of my coding identified earlier in this paper as a part of horizontalization and thematizing.

It was also important to create an audit trail to demonstrate dependability (Anfara et al., 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The audit trail serves two purposes: 1) to allow for the review of the process of the data collection and determine if the procedures were representative of the study; and 2) to allow for the examination of the results of the data collection (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this paper, I outlined the process of my data collection and any “auditor” will have access to the document as well as the original transcripts, reviewed transcripts (with pseudonyms), coding iterations, the NVivo project log, faculty handbooks, field notes, and



journal. As is required by Drake University's IRB protocols, the hard copy, electronic, and all other forms of data will be stored for the required three years following analysis/project completion, and then will be completely destroyed.

**Confirmability.** Confirmability allows the reader to assess if the findings are subjective and, in fact, those of the researcher (Anfara et al., 2002; Krefting, 1991). There are three techniques demonstrating confirmability and include the audit trail noted above, triangulation mentioned earlier in this section, and maintaining a journal (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The audit trail includes six categories developed by Halpern (1983): "raw data, data reduction and analysis products, data reconstruction and synthesis products, process notes, materials relating to intentions and dispositions, and instrument development information" (pp. 319-320, as cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

For the purposes of this study, I attempted to increase the triangulation of qualitative data sources to support the confirmability for my research. Patton (1990) wrote:

This means comparing and cross-checking the consistency of information derived at different times and by different means *within qualitative methods*. It means (1) comparing observational data with interview data; (2) comparing what people say in public with what they say in private; (3) checking for the consistency of what people say about the same thing over time; and (4) comparing the perspectives of people from different points of view. (p. 467)

Again, I used prolonged engagement; interviews; institutional resources, such as faculty handbooks and meeting minutes when available; and my field notes to compare and verify information and support confirmability and triangulation.

## **Bias Statement and Ethical Considerations**

Fairness in discussion is the effort to put your case objectively. When an expression of our conviction first comes to our minds it is couched in question-begging terms. The motion breaks out uppermost and permeates our whole idea. To be objective we must sort out facts, opinions, and emotions and present them separately, in this order. This makes it possible for each to be separately checked and criticized. It lays our whole position open to our opponent. It is a painful discipline which breaks a prophetic flood and reduces our claims to a minimum. But fairness requires this; and also that we ascribe our opponent his true points, while the limitations of our knowledge and our natural bias be frankly acknowledged. (Polanyi, 1969, p. 68)

**Bias statement.** Johnson (1997) suggested that researcher bias threatens the credibility of a study but noted that it could be monitored through reflexivity by the researcher. Crotty (1998) wrote, “the researcher’s own knowledge and presuppositions are said to be ‘bracketed’ so as not to taint the data” (p. 83). As I wrote this statement initially, I believed that it was important to acknowledge I had been a part of an organizational restructuring at my institution, which eliminated my position, reduced the hours of my administrative assistant, and affected at least nine other staff members. Sharing this information was done in order to be transparent about where I was professionally at that time. I also believed then and continue to believe it is important to note recognizing my positionality will help me to examine my attitude and judgments about this research topic.

My motivation for writing about the lived experience of faculty in a shared governance environment comes from my experience working in higher education for the past 10 years. I have enjoyed strong working relationships with both faculty and administrators and hope to one

day serve this community as an upper-level administrator myself. I am concerned with the tensions that appear to exist between faculty and administrators. It has been my experience that faculty are skeptical of the administrators at their institutions, not without cause. However, I have also witnessed resentment from faculty towards the process of governance. For example, I have heard faculty question why they need to serve on committees, asserting that it distracts them from their teaching, research, or even the student advising work they prefer.

I believe the personalities of many faculty prevent them from being thoughtful about decisions made by their institutions' administration. For the most part, I would argue college and university faculty are intelligent, ambitious, and concerned with the missions of their institutions. However, too many faculty members are skeptical of the motivations of the administration and question, for the sake of questioning, many decisions under consideration. I have witnessed this in my work life, read about it in the headlines of academic periodicals, and heard from colleagues at other institutions which have all influenced my perceptions of faculty. I also believe many faculty do not have a high regard for staff at their institutions. For example, at my last institution, I was a part of a conversation in which a faculty member shared that "I don't think staff care about the institution because they can't get tenure. They aren't committed to it in the way that I am, as a tenured professor." Not only did this sentiment shock me into silence, it was deeply offensive to the several staff members who were sitting around the table at the time who each had served the college for longer periods than had this particular faculty member.

Regarding senior administrators, and admittedly in response to losing my job last fall, I questioned their ability to make decisions to better their institutions in the long term, not just make them more fiscally sound in the present. As I have shared with friends and colleagues about the decision to eliminate my position, "I could have also made the argument for closing

down my department; but I could have also countered it with solid data to demonstrate why it would be a bad decision.” I believe administrators have hard decisions to make in light of economic downturns which can be difficult to anticipate. However, I am not sympathetic to administrators who choose to make imprudent decisions without respecting or consulting those individuals who can provide the best and most honest information from which a decision can be made. In general, I admit I see most senior administrators as concerned primarily with their own personal power and willing to embrace the first option coming to hand instead of taking the time to be creative and come up with better options.

While the “silver lining” to not having a full-time job was that I could devote my time to writing my dissertation, it has been an emotional and difficult time. Aside from the financial repercussions, and despite the fact that I have a great deal of support from friends and family and a loving husband, there is a psychological impact to losing one’s job that has deeply affected how I think about higher education and my place in it. I have made every effort to make sure I was able to evaluate the data openly and without being influenced by my current unemployment. But as Polanyi (1969) reminded me, a bias statement is meant to express my positionality and moderate opposition from those who may challenge my findings. As he said, it can be “painful.... But fairness requires this” (p. 68).

**Ethical considerations.** Some of the ethical considerations needing to be addressed relate to the relationship between the researcher and the participants. Austin (1990) wrote, “Faculty members generally are more likely to talk freely with another faculty member or with a respected outsider” (p. 70) and it was part of my job to gain the trust of my participants so that they were comfortable sharing their experiences with me.

Creswell (2013) discussed reciprocity and the importance of “giving back to participants for their time and efforts” during the study (p. 55). He explained that researchers have a responsibility to explain the purpose and process of the study, sharing with the participants what will be done with the results, and reviewing the risks and benefits to the participants during the research study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2013).

Qualitative researchers are also concerned with their insider/outsider role as it pertains to the research (Creswell, 2013). Dwyer and Buckle (2009) noted that “there are costs and benefits to be weighed regarding the insider versus outsider status of the researcher” (p. 59). Qualitative researchers must decide whether their insider perspective might influence the study, though need not keep a researcher from moving ahead (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Oldfather & West, 1994). Researchers must acknowledge their insider or outsider role when looking at the setting of the study. While I was not a true insider in relationship to the research participants, as one who aspires to be a college administrator, I was sensitive to the fact I am also not necessarily an outsider either. According to Dwyer and Buckle (2009), I would be considered a “peripheral member researcher, who (does) not participate in the core activities” (p. 55) and it was important to understand my role in relationship to the participants as I carried out my research so that I was aware of how my biases affected the study.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

This study was delimited to tenured professors at Midwest colleges that use a system of shared governance in their decision-making processes. Further parameters were established and included:

- leadership roles, level of involvement as a faculty leader
- discipline

Potential limitations to this study included its qualitative nature and its composition of profiles of faculty who shared their lived experience with the phenomenon. It is not a statistical sampling of faculty. The results of this heuristic phenomenological study are meant to capture the essence of the lived experience; or as Moustakas (1990) explained, “The depiction is complete in itself. Interpretation not only adds nothing to heuristic knowledge but removes the aliveness and vitality from the nature, roots, meanings, and essences of experience” (p. 19).

Another limitation to this study involves the distinction between transparency and inclusion. It is important to this study to recognize that faculty participants may have conflated the issue of transparency with inclusion. This means, for example, a faculty participant may have equated their disapproval of a decision made by the administration with a lack of transparency on the part of the administration. Alternatively, a participant may have believed that there was greater transparency in decision-making if they themselves approved of the final decision that was made.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **INTRODUCTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS**

This chapter will provide brief descriptions of the institutions at which the faculty participants work as well as profiles of each of the participants. I have chosen to assign random genders to the participants and others referenced in this study by flipping a coin, to increase the anonymity of the participants. I trust readers of this paper to recognize and withhold their own gender biases as they read this study.

Pseudonyms are also used for the college names, as well as any identifying buildings at the colleges referenced in the data. Faculty and institutional committee names are often similar from one institution to another and I chose generic names for each of these committees (see Appendix E for a full list) and use them for each of the colleges. Finally, I have selected generic terms for the common administrative roles (see Appendix F for a full list) seen on college campuses today. For example, though the title of the senior academic officer varies from institution to institution, for the purposes of this paper, I have chosen to use the title, Dean, to refer to this individual as needed.

#### **College Profiles**

This study considers the perceptions of nine faculty members at three different small private liberal arts colleges in two different states in the Midwest. Each of the institutions has the same Carnegie Basic Classification, Baccalaureate Colleges—Arts & Sciences, which “includes institutions where baccalaureate degrees represent at least 10% of all undergraduate degrees and where fewer than 50 master’s degrees or 20 doctoral degrees were awarded during the update year” (Carnegie, 2015). All of the colleges are exclusively undergraduate, four-year institutions with large residential populations. Additionally, all three colleges are affiliated with a religious

institution and have similar student/faculty ratios. Two of the colleges have experience with the same administrator.

Table 4.1

*Demographic Information of Colleges<sup>a</sup>*

College	# of Students	# of Full-Time Faculty	# of Part-Time Faculty	Majors	# of Administrators <sup>b</sup>	Graduation Rate
Corona	2,500	200	50	45	21	80-90%
Oliver	2,500	200	50	40	16	75-85%
Underwood	1,500	100	55	35	13	60-70%

<sup>a</sup>Except where otherwise noted, information is from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2015), however, in order to provide more confidentiality to the study, numbers have been approximated.

<sup>b</sup>Administrators included here are those positions of Associate Dean/Executive Director or higher.

### Participant Profiles

All of the faculty participants are tenured at their respective colleges. A total of 14 faculty members were contacted to participate in the study. Of the nine faculty who were interviewed for this study, seven are women and two are men (random generation assigned four participants male pronouns and five participants female pronouns). I contacted the most number of faculty at Underwood College, where four of the seven contacted were not available to participate in this study for various reasons including one faculty member who is not yet tenured, and one who was not available to participate due to his travel schedule. Four of the participants were associate or assistant professors at a previous college before being hired at their current institution. Years of service at their current institutions ranged from approximately 10 years to over 25 years.

I also want to note that the faculty participants demonstrated a dedication to their disciplines and to their institutions as well as a deep commitment to the scholarship and humanity of their students. At the time of my interviews at one college, the community had just learned of a recent alum's tragic death and this was felt by students and faculty alike. Some of



the concerns and challenges facing faculty at these institutions may seem like molehills to an outside observer. But the results of decisions made at small institutions, with faculty dedicated to a liberal arts tradition, are far-reaching, and affect the values these institutions generally share, and in so doing, affect the values that the people who serve these institutions generally share. To dismiss, out-of-hand, the anxiety or the words shared by the faculty would be doing them a disservice in reading this study. A disservice to the loyalty and commitment that they have made to their institutions.

### **Corona College**

**Dr. Dylan Lewis.** Before moving to the Midwest, Dr. Lewis worked at a college in the Western region of the United States. Dylan is a professor in the Humanities & Fine Arts Division of Corona College and has been tenured for over 20 years. His service to the college includes being chair of the Appointment and Promotions Committee as well as chair of his department, which Dylan has done for almost half of the 30 years he has been at Corona.

Walking into Dylan's office for the first time, you know someone creative works here. Colorful rugs and works of art cover what would otherwise be a dark space. On a day with temperatures well below zero, Dylan's office is comfortable and inviting. From our first phone call his curiosity has been evident, and not just about the research; I also sensed he wanted to know who I was, why I wanted to study the relationships between faculty and administration. Both of our interviews started with casual conversations about my research.

Before the second interview, Dylan shared what he had been thinking about "values" since our first phone call. It was obvious this was someone who cared deeply about language, about the importance of it, about how humans are affected by it. When he spoke, it was purposeful and intentional; clearly Dylan wanted to make sure I understood his point of view. He

also seemed to understand human nature and this became apparent when discussing his approach to teaching in the fine arts. We discussed seminar style teaching, where everyone in the class sits in a circle so each student, as well as the professor, can interact with each other, see each other, and where no one voice is more important than another. Dylan shared:

I'm somebody who believes in the model that there is a leader in every chair. I would say that what I try to do is create a climate, an atmosphere, where everyone feels comfortable to express their opinions. I believe better solutions come from "group-think" and I trust that process a lot.

Dylan explained, not only was sitting in a circle a part of his teaching method, but that he also incorporated a similar balance of voices as a leader working with faculty colleagues.

**Dr. Morgan Robinson.** As I started my interview with Dr. Robinson, an ice cold wind blew. We had rearranged our meeting from the afternoon to the early morning in an effort to beat the storm scheduled to hit the area late in the day. The relatively new building was quiet. The college was on winter break and few people would be expected to work that day. Morgan is an easy person to talk with, curious about the other person's story as well as open and willing to share his own. As we started talking, it was clear to me the Corona College community is important to Morgan. He has a deep respect for his faculty colleagues, his current administrators, students, and staff.

Dr. Robinson has had a long career as a professor at Corona College, having served there for over 25 years in the Professional Studies Division. During that time, Morgan had "been elected by my colleagues to about every committee around here that matters," including the Curriculum and Academic Policies Committee, Appointment and Promotions Committee, and

Faculty Council. Though he had also served as department chair for many years, Morgan believed that it was time to let the newer faculty take on the responsibility of the role.

A pragmatist, Morgan thought about things matter-of-factly. When discussing his interaction with college administrators, he described his function as a committee member was to “essentially provide administrators with the information and input to make decisions.” Morgan appreciated that it was the responsibility of administrators to make decisions, so the faculty could focus on their teaching and the students. He also described Corona as a small college “so I know the characters around here quite well.” Morgan even went to church with members of the Corona community, giving him an opportunity to get to know his colleagues outside of the college environment.

**Dr. Jordan Walker.** Dr. Walker spoke candidly throughout the study. Though she believes her philosophy of leadership is “kind of ‘old school,’” Jordan has also been at the forefront of helping to recruit and increase the number of female scholars into her division, the Natural Sciences & Mathematics. Jordan laughed as she described her own leadership “differences between the classroom and committee work and some similarities.” She easily called herself out on what she would like to do differently, saying:

For example, grading and getting back to students—I don’t do that as well as I would like to. Definitely not. But from the perspective of chairing the department or chairing the Appointment and Promotions Committee—as far as meeting deadlines, assigning roles, and things like that, that’s something that I’m typically good at.

A full professor, Jordan has worked at Corona College since the late 1980s and has served on a number of committees. Aside from chairing both her department and the Appointment and Promotions Committee, Jordan has also been on the Faculty Council several times.

We talked easily about the intersections and differences between qualitative and quantitative research. Jordan remembered my description of the meditative nature of heuristic phenomenological research from our first conversation. She seemed interested in a process allowing, in fact requiring, the kind of rumination that is asked for in heuristic phenomenology. I shared with Jordan my personal experiences and deep appreciation for people who work in the natural and physical sciences.

Though she hesitated somewhat, Jordan spoke frankly about the concerns she had for her institution. Jordan paused before sharing any sort of criticism; it was apparent she wanted to balance her comments. In particular, when Jordan spoke about the work she had done to help a male-dominated division be more inclusive; she addressed the reality of the situation as it was. She didn't shy away from describing the sexism that existed at the time and clearly understood the importance of being part of the change.

### **Oliver College**

**Dr. Kelly Hall.** Dr. Hall is a professor in the Social Sciences Division and currently serves as her department's chair. Her career in postsecondary education started as an adjunct instructor before getting her doctorate and moving into higher education full-time. Kelly has been at Oliver College for over 25 years. In her time at Oliver, she has been a part of a college she deeply admires, not only the faculty but also the students, staff, and administration. As a faculty member, Kelly has had an opportunity to work with professors from all of the divisions at the college and has served on several committees including the Curriculum and Academic Policies Committee, the Admissions Committee, and the Faculty Council.

Kelly credits her childhood with providing her the background necessary to lead others, saying:

I am a product of being the oldest of a large family. We are all very different; that is something I understand. I think that it is important for a leader to understand that people's perspectives are going to be different. It's neither good nor bad, it just is.

This kind of practical approach to leadership as well as sensitivity to human nature was demonstrated time and again throughout our interviews together. I am one of the younger children in a large family, and Kelly and I had a lot to discuss. We spent time talking about how growing up in a large family influences how we see the world, how we work and interact in groups as well as with individuals.

Kelly was thoughtful and reflective. Though she did not always come quickly to an answer, her responses were worth the wait. As I listened to Kelly at one point, behind her I could see the email list grow longer on the computer screen at her desk and we did our best to ignore the phone ringing. I arrived early for all of my appointments at Oliver College. Before my appointment with Kelly I overheard a conversation she had with a faculty colleague in which Kelly suggested that she could get some work done before the afternoon appointment with me. Kelly referenced that project during our interview, as I apologized for cutting in early on her day, saying it would have been impossible to complete it before we met anyway. However, as I watched the emails come in, I could not help but appreciate the fact she was giving me her time and understood a winding road would still lead to her insights.

**Dr. Stacy Young.** Dr. Young has worked both in and out of postsecondary institutions for many years. She worked for another Midwestern college as an assistant professor in the mid-90s, left higher education, but then returned to teach at Oliver a few years later, where she has been since the early 2000s. Stacy has chaired the Community Life Committee, the Assessment

Committee, and is now on the Curriculum and Academic Policies Committee. She also serves the college as the director of assessment in addition to her faculty responsibilities.

With all of these different roles and responsibilities, it is no wonder her desk, and every space in her office, was covered by books, binders, documents, files, and papers. While the chaos of the paperwork may have appeared overwhelming, Stacy seemed at ease and comfortable in her office chair. Two large windows in her office overlooked a beautiful campus, where I saw a deer bounding across the thick snow only a few feet from the building, apparently a common scene.

With Stacy's experience as an administrator at other organizations, she shared:

Administrators have to know more than the rest of the college. I mean, [the President and their cabinet] need to be privy to information that is confidential. I've got my job to do and they've got their job to do.

Stacy's administrative experience has certainly informed the faculty role she has now. She uses those skills to the benefit of her department, which requires quite a bit of time-consuming paperwork meeting state and national guidelines.

Although Stacy is responsible for collecting and providing not only her departmental colleagues but also the wider college community of faculty and administrators with assessment data, it is clear she understands the sensitive nature of her position. Stacy discussed how important it was to her for the faculty to understand that while she was the keeper of the information, the information was not Stacy's to keep. It also seemed evident Stacy understood that it can be complicated to be the leader, whether a faculty leader or an administrator, explaining when a decision must be made, "When the buck stops with you, sometimes you end

up having to make decisions that are not as collegial or collaborative” as one would like them to be.

**Dr. Riley Allen.** In talking with Dr. Allen, you will immediately get the sense that this is someone who pulls no punches, tells it like it is, and wants you to return the favor. She has worked at Oliver College since the mid-2000s, her first job right after earning her Ph.D. Currently, Riley is a faculty member in the Humanities & Fine Arts Division. Riley serves on Faculty Council and is in the first year of a three-year term; next year, she will chair the Council. Sharing her philosophy of the role, Riley describes her style of leadership as an active one; listening for faculty concerns and advocating to the administration on behalf of the faculty. She believed it was important to be the voice for others when others might hesitate to come forward, and shared that it was a responsibility of gaining tenure to become this voice.

Though I interrupted her lunch, Riley quickly invited me into her office to have a seat. She started the interview by apologizing, saying a meeting had come up and she would have to cut short our time together. Since I had arrived 15 minutes early for the interview, I explained that we would have more than enough time, and I would make sure to be out of her office in time for her to prepare for her next meeting. It also happened to be the first day of classes for the semester, which I had not known, and explained the flurry of activity on campus that day. Between interviews, I stopped at the student union and found it filled with students as well as representatives in the lobby taking orders for class rings and other sundry collegiate items.

Every time I spoke with Riley I could hear her passion for teaching at Oliver College and her genuine respect for the students, faculty, and administrators. Riley is someone who truly believes in the mission of her institution, believes in her students, their scholarship, and holds a high regard for the work done by the faculty and administrators in pursuit of that mission. Riley

shared a story about returning to her alma mater a few years ago, when she had been asked to read some of her work at an event honoring a retiring professor:

I went to a reception attended by everyone in the department and of course you see all of the professors. I got the sense that all of these people were really glad to see me and the other former graduate students but that they didn't really like each other that much. They didn't *really* want to spend that much time with each other. And I had several moments of nostalgia for Oliver that weekend. As much as I love my alma mater, I think that the Oliver faculty, on some level, we really *genuinely like* each other. We spend time with each other, we trust each other.

While Oliver faculty are not without their disagreements, Riley reiterated throughout the study that no dispute was unresolvable and emphasized the importance of keeping things in perspective.

### **Underwood College**

**Dr. Fran Harris.** Dr. Harris is a department chair in the Professional Studies Division and has been at Underwood College for 15 years. He has served on the Appointment and Promotions Committee, Assessment Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, and the General Education Committee. Fran is someone who is very attuned to the roles and responsibilities of the different constituent groups on campus. He demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the faculty handbook, and was sensitive to the way the administration at Underwood College interacted with the faculty. This sensitivity made it somewhat difficult for Fran to be as open and honest as I believe he might have been.

I was impressed by Fran's energy and enthusiasm. In spite of thinking the administration at Underwood is dismissive of faculty, he continues to want to serve his students in the best ways



possible. It was important to Fran to emphasize how much he appreciated working with his faculty colleagues, how much he appreciated the students at Underwood. Regardless of believing that the faculty are overlooked as partners in the decision-making process at Underwood, Fran knows the college's culture is one that cares deeply about its students.

Fran was easy to talk to. He had a very large office with a conference table in it. Music in the background mixed with laughter as Fran related that he was someone who liked to visit with other people, which is what made collaborating with faculty colleagues so easy for him. Fran shared several examples of how his department was working with other departments on campus to grow or strengthen the programs they offered the students at Underwood.

However, it is important to note Fran believes that the faculty are disrespected by the senior administration at Underwood. Fran noted that at faculty meetings, administrators have referred to the faculty as "whiners" and claimed they are "lazy." Fran shared the growing sense of frustration he has about his own attitude as well:

It seems to be kind of a culture of fear. We get angry but then we don't advocate for ourselves. If you go to our faculty meetings, there are only a few people who talk and I'm not sure if that's because people think it's futile. I'm not talking about the non-tenured faculty. I get it if you're not tenured, because when I was in that boat I was afraid to speak. But now I'm tenured, I don't speak a lot because I don't know if it would matter.

This sense of frustration dominated our conversation about Fran's experience with how the Underwood faculty and administration related to one another.

**Dr. Sam Clark.** Dr. Clark also expressed frustration regarding how the administration contemplated making academic decisions to the detriment of the programs and Underwood College's identity as a liberal arts institution. She made strong statements about advocating for

the faculty and the institution which were tempered with comments demonstrating a deep humility as well. Sam would often make self-deprecating remarks about herself and shared touching stories about staff members. She was also proud of the students attending Underwood, saying “Our students are highly sought and rarely pay for master’s degrees. They frequently win scholarships and are routinely picked up as teaching assistants at institutions that don’t normally do that.”

Becoming a professor was a second career for Sam, and she has been at Underwood College for over 20 years. The leadership positions she has held include being the chair of Faculty Council in the mid-2000s as well as serving currently as a department chair in the Humanities & Fine Arts Division and a co-chair of the International Studies Committee. When asked to describe her leadership style, Sam is reticent to use any labels, instead saying that it is hard to win over people by being a top-down leader and “it’s much better to be consultative and to listen to what others might have to say because half the time they have a better idea than I do anyway.”

**Dr. Kim Lee.** Dr. Lee has been working in postsecondary education the longest of all of the faculty participants in this study. He received his Ph.D. in the early 1970s and worked at another institution in the Mid-Atlantic region before moving to the Midwest to work at Underwood College. Kim has served both as a professor and administrator and currently is a professor in the Natural Sciences & Mathematics Division at Underwood, where he has been teaching since the late 1980s. He has been a department chair, member of the Curriculum and Academic Policies Committee, as well as the General Education Committee. With retirement a few years away, Kim has purposefully stepped back from committee and chair roles, saying “I think some of the younger people need to have a voice.”

Since Kim has worked at Underwood since the late 1980s, his institutional knowledge is extensive. Kim's experience has been different than some of his faculty colleagues in that his own experience as an administrator in years past has informed his relationships with the deans and presidents who have served Underwood in the time Kim has also been at the college. With this deep history with the college, Kim is a stoic when it comes to thinking about how well college administrators listen to or value faculty input:

I think it depends upon who occupies the position. I think there are some deans and presidents who have been willing to listen and who aren't making the decisions necessarily from on high. And then there are others who probably let the words of the faculty go in one ear and out the other and never stops in the middle.

Kim's understated sense of humor comes through on several occasions during the course of the study. He often tries to put things into perspective and find a middle ground of understanding, not wanting to let the faculty forget the ultimate responsibility for an institution rests with the President and the Board of Trustees.

## CHAPTER 5

### FINDINGS

Heuristic phenomenology includes in its structure periods in which to reflect; I took advantage of these periods and found them crucial to the development of themes as they emerged in the data. These periods, known as *indwelling*, allowed the themes to emerge naturally (*illumination*) but also forced me to consider each one both individually as well as a part of the whole, leading to the fifth and sixth stages of heuristic phenomenological research, *explication* and *creative synthesis*. Additionally, as I conducted this phenomenological study on the lived experiences of faculty members at institutions that use a shared governance model, it was important to me at all times to be aware of my positionality. Not only does reflecting upon my biases help me to understand how I construct knowledge from the data collected, but also how those biases influence how I understand the participants' lived experiences.

The research question which guided this study was: What is it like to be a faculty member at an institution that uses shared governance? Several sub-questions supported the main question: what are these professors' perceptions of their relationships with college leadership in the context of their perceived roles and responsibilities in the shared governance structure; how do these perceptions influence their engagement in shared governance; and how has their engagement in shared governance influenced their perceptions of their relationships with administrators?

This chapter presents four themes and their sub-themes emerging from the data (see Table 5.1). In determining the themes, I referred back to the approaches to developing thematic statements van Manen (2014) suggested. While listening to the digitally recorded interviews a second time, after transcribing them, I made a list of repeated phrases and similar statements.

Table 5.1

## Themes &amp; Sub-Themes

**Theme #1: The Relationships between Faculty and Their Administrators Influence the Level of Faculty Engagement in Shared Governance**

- Faculty Acknowledge an Institution's Ultimate Decision-Making Authority Is Vested in the Board
- Faculty Relationships with the Cabinet Are Varied
  - Faculty Relationships with the President Define How Much Influence the Faculty Believe They Have on Decisions Made at Their Institutions
  - Strong Faculty Relationships with the Dean Encourage Faculty to Have Confidence in Their Role as Decision-Makers at Their Institutions

**Theme #2: Faculty Value Communication and Transparency and Recognize How It Influences Their Participation in Decision-Making**

- A Lack of Transparency Decreases Faculty Support for Decisions Made for Their Institutions
- Adequate Transparency Increases Faculty Support for Decisions Made for Their Institutions

**Theme #3: The Extent to Which Administrators Value Faculty Input Influences Faculty Morale and Motivation to Participate in Governance**

- Faculty Perceptions of How Administrators Value Shared Governance Influence Their Engagement in Decision-Making
- Faculty Believe That How Much Administrators Value Shared Governance Affects Morale
  - How New and Expanded Responsibilities Affects Faculty Members' Sense of Self-Worth and Increases Skepticism of Administrators' Value of Shared Governance
  - The Ways Faculty Are Hopeful about Engaging in Shared Governance to Benefit Their Institutions and How They Think It Influences Their Teaching and Interactions with Students
- Faculty Have Both Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations Influencing Their Engagement in Shared Governance
  - Ways Faculty Are Intrinsically Motivated to Participate in Shared Governance
  - Ways Faculty Are Extrinsically Motivated to Participate in Shared Governance

**Theme #4: The Complexities of Power Influence Faculty Engagement in Governance**

- Faculty Responses to Administrative Power
- Evidence of Faculty Power
- Faculty Engagement in Shared Power

This helped to provide a broad view of the general themes presented in the data, the first step in van Manen's (2014) approaches. Next, for the second and third steps described by van Manen

(2014), I used the NVivo software as well as my advisor, who served as my “critical friend.” I created codes for the data units based on the emergent themes, which allowed me to complete a comprehensive examination of the data, using a line by line approach.

### **Theme #1: The Relationships between Faculty and Their Administrators Influence the Level of Faculty Engagement in Shared Governance**

It was evident that the perceptions the faculty participants had of the various stakeholders involved in a shared governance environment, particularly those held of their presidents and deans, were constructed over many years of experience working at their institutions. Most of the faculty had worked with more than three deans during their careers, which ranged from 10 years to 25 years. All of the faculty participants had experiences with at least two presidents. Some faculty reported active relationships with the Board, though most shared that there was little interaction between faculty and Board members.

**Faculty acknowledge an institution’s ultimate decision-making authority is vested in the Board.** The faculty recognized the ultimate authority for decision-making was vested in the colleges’ Boards of Trustees. Even though faculty were included in decisions being made, Dr. Jordan Walker noted that it was, “a shared process even though everyone, including the faculty, realized it was a Board decision ultimately.”

Often faculty used the words “ultimate” or “final” to indicate the president and the Board had the most authority. However, the participants provided examples of how several administrators included the faculty in the decision-making process, using their administrative power effectively. Dr. Kelly Hall, at Corona College, explained that while:

Ultimately, the Academic Dean and the President, who also interview, are the ones who [give the] “thumbs-up” to hire or “thumbs-down.” The faculty are on the search

committees and give our recommendations, and generally our recommendations are taken, but we can't *hire* people.

This was true for other institutions as well. Additionally, faculty accepted that the administration was primarily responsible for the institution's overall budget. Though some appreciated they had faculty representatives on influential committees reviewing the budget, in general, the faculty understood their limited access to it, as noted by Dr. Morgan Robinson, "That's access to information I don't want. I've got enough to do without having to worry about the finances of the place." Dr. Riley Allen shared:

I've heard some of my colleagues joke that, pretty much if it involves the spending of large amounts of money, it's not the faculty's business. That is kind of the way it plays out for capital projects, for fund-raising, for salaries—those are the administration's bailiwick. They make the decisions about that and faculty can accept that.

Additionally, some faculty thought the influence of the Board was due in large part to the financial commitment many of the Trustees make to the institutions. Several faculty noted that the demographics of the Boards at their institutions had shifted in the past decade from being composed mainly of members of the clergy and alumni of the institution to a Board of Trustees with members who have more corporate, senior executive backgrounds. Dr. Dylan Lewis described the Board at Corona as having some "Board members who operate from a more corporate and a more market-driven model." At Oliver, Dr. Allen shared, "I think that there are some very successful business people [on the Board] who are used to making decisions pretty quickly and pretty definitively." While this change was seen as being appropriate for the times, considering the economic realities of small private liberal arts colleges in the Midwest, faculty did think this affected the way decisions were made at their colleges.

Faculty also emphasized that the way the president facilitated their relationship with the Board of Trustees directly influenced their perceptions of the Board. At both Underwood and Corona Colleges the way previous presidents had limited contact between the Board and the faculty and campus in general had led to distrust of the Board on the part of faculty during previous administrations. At both institutions, the previous president moved Board meetings to off-campus sites, and the faculty perceived this as an intentional move made by the presidents to widen the gap and further limit communication between the faculty and the Board. Many participants were skeptical that the faculty could have any real influence with the Board because the president serves as the main conduit of information between the campus and the Board. Dr. Sam Clark, at Underwood, shared her frustration with the constraints placed on the faculty's ability to contact the college's Board of Trustees:

We are not allowed really, by our handbook, to have any contact with the Trustees. I suppose if *they* initiate it, that is one thing, but we are not allowed to initiate contact. [If a faculty member does contact a Board member], the faculty member [risks being] on thin ice. [When the Trustees] get together on campus once a year, our Faculty Council chair makes a report of some kind to the Trustees. It usually only involves thanking them for their financial support [in my experience serving as Faculty Council chair].

Other faculty shared Dr. Clark's perception. More than one faculty member shared how their previous presidents might have responded negatively to any interaction between a professor and a Board member.

Several of the participants at Underwood and Corona Colleges hesitated to share concerns that they had about the relationship with the Board of Trustees. The faculties at both colleges are trying to work with their current administrations to ease the tensions presented by



the top-down leadership style of their past presidents. However, there are lingering resentments about how they thought they were treated by the Board. Dr. Jordan Walker commented:

I know things are presented to the Board by the president. There are many, many good and supportive people on the Board who are supportive of the faculty. But then there are number of people who have a more “business model,” conservative, “whip those people into shape!” type of mentality. The decisions of the Board depend upon on how the President presents things to the Board.

I could sense the frustration of Dr. Walker as she revealed the details of how difficult it was to get the Board to acknowledge how the actions of President Jody Thompson, the previous president, were damaging the college. However, both Dr. Walker and Dr. Dylan Lewis acknowledged that once the Board had the evidence in front of them, presented to them by an independent consultant hired to evaluate the situation, the Board swiftly took action. They also said that conversations have continued to take place between the Board and faculty about what shared governance looks like and means to the Corona College community.

**Faculty relationships with the cabinet are varied.** When it came to the perceptions faculty have of senior administrators at their institutions, the reviews were mixed. The faculty at Oliver College reported that they believed their relationships with the members of their cabinet were amicable, frank, and effective. Dr. Kelly Hall shared:

We have a new President this year, [but] from what we can tell, he [President Brown,] welcomes conversations. I would say our Academic Dean, [Robin Wilson] has been very open to these conversations [as well]. If I need to talk to [Dean Wilson], I can easily call her as department chair and ask for a meeting to discuss issues that I’d like to bring up to her. There’s always respect for faculty input and so I think we have an administration that

does a very fine job of inviting faculty into the conversation in the decision-making process. I feel that we are listened to.

Both Dr. Stacy Young and Dr. Riley Allen shared similar impressions. When discussing their experiences with members of the cabinet, over and over again the Oliver College professors believed that these senior administrators valued and sought input from the faculty.

The faculty from Underwood College shared a different experience. Dr. Fran Harris reflected:

From my perspective, there seems to be a divide between administrator and faculty as in the administrators don't trust the faculty and vice versa. Administrators look at us like we're whiny and the faculty look at administrators and think that all they care about is bean-counting. Those two tropes are stereotypes. The reality is that it can't be true, there has to be something closer to the middle but we're not engaged in those kinds of creative talks and I think that without creative, honest discussion, bad things happen.

Dr. Harris shared an example of a cabinet member dismissing faculty as "whiners" at a faculty meeting in response to a professor who questioned why the faculty were being asked to increase their responsibilities to include recruitment efforts. It was Dr. Sam Clark's perception that the cabinet's idea of shared governance was to make a decision and *share* the decision with the faculty.

The perceptions the faculty at Corona College had of their cabinet were more optimistic, with Dr. Morgan Robinson noting he had very positive interactions with many of the cabinet members and believed strongly that the current senior administrators reached out to faculty for their input. Dr. Dylan Lewis reiterated the sentiment, explaining:

Right now, we are in a new era. We have a new president [President Pat Johnson] who very much believes in transparency and who seems to value genuine shared governance more, and who also seeks out ways for honest and in-depth conversation between faculty and Board members. It's been a seismic shift [even though] it's very early in the game.

Dr. Jordan Walker's comments were hopeful as well, believing Corona College was on its way out of a very destructive recent history with the previous president, President Thompson. However, the optimism expressed was tempered with the understanding it would take time for the college to both recover financially and repair relationships among the stakeholders.

***Faculty relationships with the president define how much influence the faculty believe they have on decisions made at their institutions.*** There was a myriad of perceptions of college presidents and how they lead their cabinets. All of the faculty participants had experienced the leadership styles of more than one president. The faculty at Oliver and at Corona acknowledged that they were still in a kind of honeymoon period with their recently-hired presidents. Dr. Dylan Lewis explained:

The new president, Pat Johnson, is a strong leader for Corona in that the values that he talks about, and he seems to live by, are very much in keeping with the values of the school. He really listens to input from the academic side; from the faculty at large, but also the Dean's office. Right now, Casey Moore is Dean and underneath him are Sidney Davis and Taylor Jones. There is a lot of input from the faculty that goes to Davis or Jones and then to Moore. I feel like that information is now making it to President Johnson and they are in serious conversations [with each other].

Dr. Morgan Robinson shared that "I think [President Johnson] is going to have a positive [influence on my engaging with the decision-making process]." Dr. Jordan Walker, though

similarly encouraged, acknowledged that there were concerns about the ability of President Johnson to translate an effective corporate leadership style into one suited to successfully leading an academic institution. I saw this skepticism not necessarily as a reflection of President Johnson, but as a hesitation after having experienced President Thompson's leadership style, which was a top-down management style, commonly associated with leadership in corporate America.

Dr. Lewis explained the history of several presidents under which he served in his over 30 years of teaching at Corona College. In his time at the college, Dr. Lewis had worked with presidents who rose out of the faculty ranks and understood on a very fundamental level the needs of the faculty and the academic structure of the college but who may have lacked the vision needed for the college "to thrive." Dr. Lewis noted that the previous president, President Thompson, was on the other end of the spectrum. Dr. Lewis believed that President Thompson neither understood the faculty nor the academic culture of Corona, she was not insightful enough to have a real vision for the college, and instead "ruled from on high." Dr. Walker, who, like Dr. Lewis, had been a professor at Corona for a long time, had a similar opinion of the previous presidents. Noting President Thompson in particular, Dr. Walker explained:

Our last president did not really like faculty input, she did not respect it. All of the other presidents we've had here have really respected faculty input. It was just President Thompson who was doing things that, in the faculty's mind, were in our purview and not in hers. I guess I didn't really realize how shared governance could be lost or [someone might only] be giving "lip service" to it. How confrontational it could be when you have this whole faculty that's used to operating in a very, I think, cooperative manner. And now you've got somebody who literally said to us, at an Appointment and Promotions

Committee meeting, something that was the equivalent of that famous George Bush line, “I’m the decider.” I think President Thompson really relished the role of being in charge. In relating the experience of shared governance with President Thompson, Dr. Lewis also described how quickly Thompson changed the decision-making process:

When President Thompson came, things started heading south *so* quickly. I remember numerous faculty saying, “She’s not going to be here in two years. There’s no way she is going to be here.” Because our experience had been if we were very straightforward and honest, if we presented evidence to support our argument, then shared governance works here. But boy, when it’s the president ... That was just such a harsh lesson.

For me, it was the first time I felt, “Wow, I have absolutely no control.” It was shocking, it was *absolutely shocking*. I have never seen such concerted effort to work in a responsible way [to address the challenges presented to the college by President Thompson’s leadership]. The chair and vice chair of the Faculty Council were very cognizant of publicity and PR for the whole school, all that. [Everyone tried] to work quietly and straightforwardly. Not wanting to take it to a big no-confidence vote. We did everything to avoid that. But it was a devastating period.

The hopefulness of the faculty at Corona about the new President, Pat Johnson, was clear. President Johnson is seen as someone who wants to listen, wants to hear what the questions are, wants to engage with the faculty, and is willing to do the research and provide the answers, even if those answers may be difficult for the faculty to hear. Dr. Lewis explained:

It is not all happy, touchy-feely good. I mean he really looks at the financial realities and Johnson is asking us to be really creative and put things on the table and think about innovative approaches and how the college is going to position itself given the economic

and demographic changes that all small liberal arts colleges are experiencing. But I think we all feel like Johnson is *asking* us. It's not like he is going to sneak off and do all these things that aren't us. Johnson is really [interested in] how we, Corona, can move forward.

The faculty at Oliver College expressed their satisfaction with their new president, Tate Brown, who seemed to be spending his first year getting to know the institution. Dr. Stacy Young, who was used to an informal relationship with the previous president, respected the distance President Brown seemed to have between himself and the faculty, saying "it is too soon to decide if that is really his style, or whether he has so much to get to know that he can't stop and take some time with us like we are used to having." Dr. Young was emphatic in her assessment of President Brown:

Now, is he respected? Yes. Is he good in front of the faculty when we have faculty meetings? Yes. I like his demeanor. Do I have a relationship with him? Probably not. But that's not [meant as a] negative [comment]; it is just too soon to tell.

Dr. Kelly Hall, in her role as department chair, had an open conversation with President Brown and the Dean at the start of his presidency to discuss "who we were as a department, what our role was, what things were going well in our department, what changes were on the horizon, and what kind of needs we might have. He [President Brown] wanted to know more about us." This is a typical example of the kind of communication that the faculty experienced with President Brown as well as their previous presidents at Oliver College.

The previous presidents at both Corona and Underwood had left both colleges with serious problems. Corona was an institution where the faculty had a long history of engagement in the shared governance process, whereas Underwood's faculty has largely been marginalized in the decision-making process by the school's governing document. Despite that, two Underwood

faculty members had experience with a previous president whose leadership included making sure the voice of the faculty was present in the decision-making process. One of those faculty, Dr. Sam Clark, shared:

I liked Jesse Miller [who was President of the college two presidents ago], but the reason that I liked him was that he understood that he was not a faculty member and he trusted us to do our jobs and tried to do all he could to give us the resources so that we could do that. He left the college in a very good position.

Further describing her perceptions of the relationships between faculty and presidents, Dr. Clark went on to discuss the immediate previous president at Underwood, Dana Smith:

Then along came [President Smith], who was threatened by people with degrees he had never earned. He pretended and posed as though he did. He wore doctoral robes long before he got his honorary doctorate and then began insisting people refer to him as Dr. Smith.

And finally, Dr. Clark provided her assessment of the current president of Underwood College, President Jamie Williams:

I think it's because President Williams understood that there was a great deal of dissatisfaction with the sort of imperial style of President Smith and because on Williams' better days, she does want to get input from the faculty in order to make decisions. I really like President Williams personally. I think she is a kind person, she is a scholar. She is probably sincere when she opines "I feel your pain, I understand salary is an issue," etc. But her fatal flaw is that she tends to listen to the wrong people and trusts the wrong people.

Dr. Fran Harris, a younger faculty member at Underwood, spoke of his own experiences with President Smith and President Williams. He shared a sense of personal frustration working within a system where faculty believe they are under-utilized as a resource for creative decision-making. When discussing President Williams' term as compared to Smith's, Dr. Harris said that things have not really changed regarding how faculty are included in the decision-making process. In some ways, Dr. Harris noted, matters may be worse because the faculty had looked to Williams as a new President who repeatedly emphasized that she would be transparent, but whose actions lead Dr. Harris to believe that the status quo has been maintained with decisions made by the President, in consultation with the Board and the cabinet, without input from the faculty. Dr. Harris described an ad hoc committee created early on in Williams's presidency, whose faculty representatives are appointed by the President. While initially this committee was seen as evidence of transparency, Dr. Harris noted:

Philosophically, I think she [President Williams] would argue that it is shared governance because there are faculty members on it. But when you get to pick your faculty members, you can pick whomever you want if you're the President. From my perspective, that's not shared governance. Shared governance would be to trust the faculty to elect representatives.

Dr. Harris believed that while President Williams's initial intentions were admirable, since the faculty had such high hopes that have not been realized, the results have actually meant the faculty are even more disillusioned than they were at the time of Smith's presidency. Dr. Harris said:

The faculty was so needy. We were ready for change and in a way that's unfair to Williams because the faculty needed change and we were hopeful. Our disappointment, I



think, is exacerbated. It doesn't lie in its proper place. Because we were hopeful, Williams' perceived failures are magnified. Williams is really not any more transparent than President Smith [and] I've seen a shift in her [President Williams] over the last year. I think Williams is frustrated because it's not easy trimming a budget. It's not easy running a private institution.

Further, Dr. Harris explained that because Williams neglected to make changes to the cabinet she inherited, the "ill-will" between the faculty and the cabinet continues to exist. Dr. Harris believed that the president's role has two primary functions, 1) to raise money for the college and 2) to set the tone of the climate on campus. While Dr. Harris recognized the difficulty in serving as president of a small private liberal arts college, his frustration was evident when talking about the lack of leadership he thought President Williams exhibited when dealing with cabinet members. Dr. Harris noted:

Because Williams failed [to recognize the problems on the cabinet], the climate here hasn't changed. The President must rely on her cabinet, she needs to have a strong cabinet. She failed to recognize the deep-seated issues between administration and faculty. Those problems have not been addressed because the same cabinet is here. For me, this is Williams's biggest failing.

When discussing how new hires are made on the President's cabinet, Dr. Harris shared that the faculty are not consulted when making cabinet-level hiring decisions. Because of the animosity resulting from the neglect of the shared governance process, the faculty and administration are often at odds.

Similarly, Dr. Sam Clark believed that cabinet members "consider Underwood College their own private domains." Both Dr. Clark and Dr. Harris believed that President Williams had

to negotiate the egos and in-fighting of the cabinet members resulting from the departments' competition over limited resources. Dr. Harris said that the faculty were concerned about recent internal promotions and title changes for certain cabinet members and their direct reports, noting:

The President probably doesn't see a problem from her [President Williams'] perspective. Which is at the *heart* of the issue. She does not understand that those problems, those fissures, exist. From her perspective, from her thousand foot view, she thinks she's doing a good job. She may not even know that the faculty feel upset because our culture [hasn't always been] one where you could go to the President. Well, I mean, you *could* complain to the President, but you wouldn't know what would happen to you. At least that was the feeling. I think that feeling [persists even] now. President Williams *says* her office is open but does she *really* want to hear what I have to say? I don't believe her.

Dr. Kim Lee, another longtime veteran of the Underwood College faculty, gave an assessment of the role of president at Underwood, saying, "I think it depends upon who occupies the position. I think there are some deans and presidents who have been willing to listen and who aren't making the decisions necessarily from on high." But even Dr. Lee acknowledged that the presidents who have served at Underwood have not always listened to or welcomed input from the faculty, joking about how comments from the faculty go in one ear and out the other for some presidents.

***Strong faculty relationships with the dean encourage faculty to have confidence in their role as decision-makers at their institutions.*** The data showed that the faculty at all three institutions had positive experiences with deans during their time as professors. Having a dean whom they think they can trust was paramount in their relationships with the office of academic

affairs as well as deans who are sympathetic, consultative, collaborative, and hard working. Dr. Fran Harris shared:

My favorite dean was an interim dean who was a member of the faculty, Dr. Cassidy Martin. He didn't make a lot of decisions because he was interim, but for me personally, because Cassidy was one of the faculty members who I first met when I came here [to Underwood] and because he was such an affable person and an honest person and people knew him and even if we disagreed, we felt like we had been listened to. Probably because he was a faculty member, he understood [when we were frustrated] and would let you vent. Even if he had to tell you bad news at the end of the day, he would say, "I feel for you, but it's just not going to happen." That went a really long way and when Cassidy said it, you felt like he meant it, not like he was giving you a platitude. When he had to say "no," he would explain the reason why.

Dr. Kim Lee also appreciated working with deans who are former faculty because they have "walked in our moccasins, so to speak," and are more sympathetic to the challenges facing professors.

When talking about the leadership styles of deans, several faculty members expressed that their favorite deans were those who worked collaboratively with the faculty, were available for consultation, and who exhibited a strong work ethic. Dr. Jordan Walker explained that while the Dean would want a rationale for decisions made by the department, "I don't think I've really seen many examples where that office has overridden any department or seriously questioned the choices that they were making." Dr. Morgan Robinson said that the faculty at his institution seemed "impressed with [Moore's] work ethic. This person doesn't sleep. He is consistently

good-natured, positive, and upbeat.” Dr. Kim Lee appreciated his current Dean, Quinn Anderson, though he is relatively new to the position at Underwood, noting:

He can summarize things quickly, and move on, [whereas] the Dean we had for a couple years would go all the way around the “back 40.” I like this one better. [He is good at] conducting the meeting, getting points across, very good at explaining things, and I think that is helpful.

The faculty at Oliver College focused on their strong relationships with their current dean. Dean Robin Wilson rose out of the Oliver College faculty ranks to serve in associate dean positions. Dean Wilson is technically serving as dean in a long-term interim capacity, which she has done in the past as well, and enjoys the support and respect of the faculty. Dr. Stacy Young commented, Dean Wilson has “the right kind of personality” to be dean. Each of the three faculty members participating in this study from Oliver College noted that Dean Wilson is someone who is accessible, honest, equitable, and a good communicator, adept at listening as well as speaking frankly and openly. Dr. Riley Allen, as a former student in a graduate program at a large R1 university where the relationship between the dean and faculty was not good, came to Oliver College with expectations about the dean/faculty relationship. Anticipating tensions based on her previous experience, Dr. Allen has enjoyed her strong relationships with Dean Wilson and the previous dean at Oliver:

I really feel like she will be frank with me and I can be frank with her and there is a level of trust that is really, really positive. I do trust my Dean. I trusted both of them. But the current one, in particular, I’ve worked with the most, as a faculty member but also on Faculty Council. I trust her. I feel like we have a really good relationship. I don’t feel like there’s a separate self that I have to put on when I go into the Dean’s office, like I have to

be this apple-polisher and that I can't say what I want to say. I've been pretty direct with Dean Wilson. More than I would be with some of my colleagues. She has respected that and she is able to listen to what people *mean to say* as well as what they *actually* say. She doesn't get involved in a lot of the little personality games some administrators will play. She is just a straight-up guy and I trust her.

Dr. Allen continues, describing a relationship with the Dean extending beyond her own department. Oliver College, like many other colleges across the country, is looking for ways to use its resources in the best and most efficient ways possible. An example is in faculty searches, where traditionally three final candidates have been brought to campus—to cut costs, the decision was made this year at Oliver College that each department conducting a faculty search would only be allowed to bring their final two candidates to campus. Dr. Allen shared that several departments had gone to the Dean with rationales as to why their department's faculty searches should be allowed to bring three candidates, but the Dean has held firm with the decision. Dr. Allen said that “Everybody knows and trusts the Dean is being fair. That is the way she is and people trust that she is honest and she is straight with people.” Dr. Stacy Young reiterated what an important influence it was to have the freedom to “open my mouth” and said:

I can turn to my Dean and say what I need to. I don't have to watch my remarks.

Certainly if I can feel free with the Dean, [I can be free] with everybody because I know if the Dean will understand me, [others will]. That makes a huge difference.

The experiences of the professors at Underwood and Corona Colleges are different from those at Oliver College. Underwood and Corona faculties have served with many different deans at different points over brief periods of time. Some deans were at their institutions for as little as 18 months, spending more time negotiating the president's personality than serving as a voice for

the faculty. The faculty are hesitant to engage in conversations with administrators who are still largely seen as making top-down decisions with limited faculty involvement. Dr. Sam Clark said:

Right now, this present Dean makes me a little nervous and I'm not particularly anxious to [nor do I] want to be brought into the field of fire unless I know that's where I'm going. We're apparently putting position requests on the chopping block and various kinds of things. In that respect, it's not really fear, it's just discomfort and uncertainty [in the future]. It does not lead me to [want to] invest heavily [in the shared governance process].

Additionally, the deans have been described as aloof, insincere, and unwise, making decisions without consultation with the faculty that end up hurting more than helping their faculty's departments. Dr. Fran Harris spoke of a decision made by a previous dean who decided to eliminate some programs in Harris's department:

He never asked me how I felt about it and if he would have, I would've told him that it was a mistake. And it actually was a mistake, because it hurt the program. Afterwards, about six months later, he came back and said, "I should've come to you. I should've asked you. I made a mistake and I want to apologize." I asked, "We can't undo it now, can you?" And he said, "No. No, I can't." Then he left for another institution. The previous dean's ineptitude has hurt a program of mine and I'll never recover that budget again. But that's one thing that the administration should be doing, [asking faculty for input about budget concerns. I would suggest that] department chairs be asked what makes sense to cut because [administrators] don't live here day-to-day. But that's not what happened with the previous dean.

This kind of decision-making was all the more exasperating when the deans would follow them with “platitudes,” as noted by Dr. Jordan Walker. Dr. Walker was visibly frustrated when talking about having to work with associate deans and deans who, instead of working to build resources to support faculty, alternated between offering empty words of encouragement and requests to do more work for no increase in pay. Dr. Walker and others expressed at Underwood and Corona Colleges that they believed the deans they worked with seemed more focused on “bean-counting” and “serving as ax-men” than consulting with faculty to make thoughtful, creative decisions. The deans at both colleges were seen as being ineffective communicators, even if they were available.

Additionally, the faculty at Underwood and Corona do not think the Dean is always an advocate for the faculty. Dr. Dylan Lewis suggested that if the previous president, Jody Thompson, believed Dean Moore was being too fierce an advocate for the faculty, that Moore may have suffered repercussions, including dismissal. Dr. Sam Clark noted:

Theoretically, the Academic Dean represents the faculty always. It’s not always been clear to me that that is the case. While the Dean may represent the faculty, in Underwood’s system, they appear to serve at the pleasure of the President and so I would say that their loyalties are, at best, conflicted.

This kind of identity crisis makes it difficult for faculty and their deans to establish the sense of collegiality essential for them to build a sense of community and support, a relationship allowing both the dean and the faculty a sense of security as they work to make decisions for the academic programs of the college.

However, the faculty also expressed open-mindedness about new deans, especially when the new dean was starting at a time when the college was making serious financial decisions that

may mean the loss of jobs and programs. In particular, Underwood College's Dean, Quinn Anderson, has been tasked with helping the college negotiate the reaccreditation process. Dr. Kim Lee believed Dean Anderson was the right choice for the college, and had already demonstrated a deep understanding about the reaccreditation agency and what would need to happen in order for Underwood to be successful. Dr. Lee shared that, even though he thought Dean Anderson "shoots from the hip and responds too quickly" sometimes, Anderson is able to reflect upon the decision and come back to the table if need be, admitting sometimes this type of attitude is what is best for everyone once a discussion gets heated. Dr. Fran Harris explained that he thought the differences between himself and Dean Anderson might come out of the differences in the natures of their disciplines:

Those of us with different disciplines approach the world in different ways. The Dean is a scientist and a very logical thinker. Data, hard data, is very important to him. I'm a social scientist and from my perspective, data varies, numbers aren't the end-all, be-all of my existence. Our worldviews are little bit different.

Because of these differences, Dr. Harris believed it would take time for the relationship to develop, and said that "From talking to my colleagues, I think the jury is still out for most of us here. Anderson is just new. We don't know, we just don't know."

### **Theme #2: Faculty Value Communication and Transparency and Recognize How It Influences Their Participation in Decision-Making**

The second theme emerging from the data was the importance the faculty placed on communication in a shared governance setting. For the faculty at Underwood and Corona Colleges, their previous presidents' top-down, "my way or the highway" leadership style created a damaging environment. At Underwood College, both Dr. Fran Harris and Dr. Sam Clark noted



that faculty meetings were less like meetings and more like information sessions, set up strategically so even if the faculty wanted to have an open discussion about an issue of the day, as Dr. Harris shared:

[Any discussion would be left to] usually the last 10 minutes [of the faculty meeting].

And honestly, with 100 people in the room, that's not a conversation that's easy to have at the drop of a hat, especially when you have the entire cabinet sitting in there. It is awkward at best and I don't think very genuine on the part of the cabinet. I don't think they really care what we think.

Underwood College's Faculty Council had little importance under the previous president, Dana Smith. Dr. Clark noted that while Smith was president, shared governance happened in the President's "Star Chamber" with the cabinet who would then tell the rest of the community what those decisions were.

While Dr. Harris and Dr. Clark agreed the climate at Underwood has improved somewhat under President Jamie Williams, there are still obstacles to communication that need to be addressed. The Financial Affairs Committee created by President Williams does offer the faculty more involvement in the decision-making process as it regards the college's budget. However, reports from academic departments solicited by the Dean's office are met with silence and no follow-through, casting doubt on the value of the reports. While Faculty Council has made strides in establishing itself as a more vital stakeholder in the decision-making process, meeting agendas are still set by the Dean's office.

At Corona College, the previous president, Jody Thompson, had similarly attempted to disenfranchise the faculty from the shared governance experience to which they had become accustomed. Dr. Jordan Walker shared an experience she had in her role as a volunteer board

member at a nonprofit which mirrored the climate of Corona College when Jody Thompson was president:

In my role on the Board for that organization it was the chief executive officer who was our conduit to the rest of the organization, just as the president is the conduit for what's going on at our campus to our Board. You only get one side of the story when that is the way that you find things out. When I was on this Board, a number of times I had questions in my mind about some of the things that were being reported to us by the chief executive officer. When we were doing reviews of this person, I asked "How are we going to get some input from employees?" Most of the other members of the Board worked from traditional business models where you don't ask employees for their input because [the idea is that it might be used] as their chance to get back at somebody they don't like. [The assumption being] you're not going to get a fair representation of how well this person [CEO] is doing their job.

The bottom line was that there were unhappy people employed there and they were saying things about what this CEO was doing that we weren't hearing. [Things that were] causing a real morale problem amongst the employees. The employees there were being told, like we were being told by President Jody Thompson, that they were not to talk to Board members separately. That anything they wanted shared with the Board they should tell the CEO and of course, things that they would've wanted to share with the Board had to do with problems they had with how the CEO was running some aspects of the organization.

Corona College used the interim period between President Thompson and the new president, Pat Johnson, to talk about what shared governance means to their institution. Dr. Dylan Lewis compared shared governance to a research paper:

[Just as students are asked to provide evidence to support their] theses and arrive at decisions that are based on facts and evidence, I think in a really good model of shared governance, it's that kind of communication where people are bringing solid, supporting evidence to the table for everybody to come to some sort of shared solution to move forward on whatever problem there is.

Further, if the paper provides no supporting evidence, it is not a good paper just as a decision made without communicating with all stakeholders risks not being as good a decision had everyone been included in the conversation and asked to provide evidence to support their own arguments.

Oliver College has largely been successful in negotiating the shared governance environment between the faculty, the administration, and the Board. While there was an instance in the recent past regarding the hiring process of the college President that troubled the faculty, the faculty addressed their concerns to the Board, and working together, resolved the situation. Oliver College seems to be a model of shared governance at small private liberal arts colleges. Open communication is the hallmark of governance there, and their governing documents clearly assign roles and responsibilities to the different stakeholders. As Dr. Riley Allen noted:

Shared governance means that the administration and the faculty each have a clear idea of what they are, and what they are not, responsible for and where their authority sort of stops. They are committed to supporting each other so that the institution is the best that it can be.

The faculty at Oliver College have exceptional relationships with their Dean. The three participants discussed in detail the responsibilities they believe the faculty have in communicating their concerns with each other as well as with the leadership on campus. Dr. Stacy Young related the following:

As a result of a review committee a few years ago, there has always been a fear we might lose positions and lose a program. [One of the issues discussed, asked the question:] when a department has fewer than [seven students in a major], is the department viable? That's a legitimate question. Why wouldn't you ask it? If you are really fiscally responsible, you have to ask those questions. I don't fault the committee for identifying that, but the committee—which was a combination of whole bunch of sorts of different ranks—made it clear that it [number of majors in a department], in and of itself, would not be the determining factor. Although it left people with some uneasiness, they have never cut a department. I am sure if they decided to do away with Classics, let's say, that would be a conversation ahead of time; the department would have a year or two ahead of time to figure out [how to make the program viable again.] That is the way I think this place works.

The faculty also talked about their own personal approaches in communicating with their faculty colleagues and the responsibility they had in trying to represent the interests of the faculty, whether to department or division chairs, the Dean, the President, or even the Board of Trustees. Dr. Allen emphasized that it was important for her faculty colleagues to know that, even if the parties disagreed, she was “coming out of a place of concern rather than attack.”

At Oliver College, the respect the faculty have for one another extends into the respect the faculty have for the administration and vice versa. As Dr. Young said:

I believe we, [the faculty at Oliver College], are given information [by the administration] so we can be part of the conversation. I really think we're educated by the administration to be part of the conversation.

**A lack of transparency decreases faculty support for decisions made for their institutions.** One factor in how successful decision-making can be in a shared governance environment is the level of transparency. The faculty participants acknowledged that there was no perfect solution to the issue of transparency. They understood there were certain cases that demand confidentiality and therefore faculty representatives may not be included in every decision-making process. What emerged from the data were examples that demonstrated both the effectiveness of decision-making when the administration was being transparent and the challenges arising from decisions made in what the faculty perceived as being a calculated and underhanded manner by the administration.

Those who serve as president and dean bear the responsibility of creating an open and receptive environment, where information is given in order to help all of the stakeholders participate in the shared governance environment. When information is withheld, or when there is a deception, the faculty have an obligation in a shared governance environment to challenge the authority of the dean or the president. Dr. Dylan Lewis spoke about his experience with the previous Dean, Peyton White, who had started an ad hoc committee which was representative of the faculty and would discuss concerns facing the academic programs and come up with solutions to present to the entire faculty for their ultimate approval. Initially, the committee seemed to be working as envisioned. After a while though, Dr. Lewis explained:

Decisions started to be made completely out of context. I was on the Faculty Council at that time and there was a conversation at the Faculty Council about how decisions were

made regarding adding tenure-track lines. We had asked Dean White if there were decisions being made about tenure-track lines. White had said there weren't. Then the next day, the *very* next day at lunch, one of the business professors popped up and said, "Yeah, I have got to run because we were just approved to add an extra tenure-track position and computer science got one out, too." The rest of us were [incredulous, asking], "What just happened there?"

One of the most striking things, Dr. Lewis said, "was the first instant we all of a sudden felt that, while there was a process, it was kind of a mock process. Decisions were being made outside of that process." Another instance of Dean White's lack of transparency also effectively ended his tenure at Corona College. Dr. Lewis talked about Dean White's manipulation of information so that when he proposed trimming departments, only the departments with one tenure-track faculty member were being considered for elimination. Dr. Lewis added:

[There was no discussion] about the quality of the program, nothing about the centrality to the mission, nothing about the number of students involved in [a program]. Just that they only had one tenure-track faculty member, so it seemed like an easy target or something.

The faculty responded by going to the president and to the Board and explaining what had occurred. It was a time when the college had a president who listened to the faculty, and so based on the feedback of the faculty, Dean White "was kind of shown the door after that."

The faculty at Corona College shared multiple experiences demonstrating the college had a history of strong communication between the administration and faculty. So when President Thompson chose to neglect the relationship and actively fought against including the faculty in the decision-making at Corona, it came as a shock to the faculty. In one particular instance,

President Thompson hired a faculty member without any input from the department, without any faculty search committee. The department itself did not even know the position was going to be replaced. Additionally, Dr. Jordan Walker spoke about a \$2 million financial commitment President Thompson made to another organization when, at the same time, she had told the faculty and staff of Corona College there was no money in the budget for raises or new buildings.

The lack of transparency at Corona College during President Thompson's term created a sense of anxiety among the pre-tenured faculty, non-tenure-track faculty, and administrative contracted employees of the college and inhibited them from participating in the conversations. President Thompson had set up a confrontational and destructive relationship with the tenured faculty, who are often seen as having certain protections in order to speak up and challenge the administration. The risk of losing one's job was too great for those who didn't have similar security, because as Dr. Lewis pointed out "They didn't feel they could be honest and open because looking around the room, there was this attitude of 'Great, does the President have spies here? If I speak out, will my job be gone next?'"

Underwood College faculty expressed similar frustration with a previous dean, whose decision-making was not transparent. According to Dr. Fran Harris the previous dean neglected to consult with the faculty on making hiring decisions in the office of academic affairs and he promoted people who did not have the backing of the faculty.

Underwood's previous president, Dana Smith, left a legacy of distrust and wariness among the faculty towards the administration. While the faculty had hoped President Jamie Williams would usher in a new policy of transparency, there have been recent events causing the former suspicions to creep back into the faculty consciousness. Dr. Fran Harris admitted the

faculty had “high hopes” when President Williams began because transparency was one of the themes of her candidacy.

At Underwood, there seems to be a lack of transparency about the conversations happening currently on whether or not retiring tenure-track positions will be replaced, the selection of the faculty representatives to the ad hoc financial affairs committee, and the hiring and promotion of additional administrators. Experiences with and perceptions of President Williams vary, with faculty saying they like the President but question some of the decisions she makes, as well as the people she listens to. While Dr. Sam Clark believed President Williams started her time at Underwood College in the spirit of trying to be “more consultative in the decision-making process,” the current actions of the cabinet were making it hard to believe the administration was being transparent, a sentiment shared by Dr. Fran Harris.

In particular, Dr. Clark was skeptical the current Dean, Quinn Anderson, is anything more than a tool for the cabinet when making decisions about cutting programs and cutting faculty. In her division, Humanities & the Arts, the recent loss of the only tenured faculty member for a program has meant the major, a major important to the liberal arts tradition, has lost its only tenured professor. Dr. Clark, in talking about the relationship between the faculty and the administration, acknowledged:

On the one hand, it is more open than it used to be, certainly a lot less hostile; but on the other hand, I would say that the balance of power is still largely within the hands of the administration. They are not as concerned as I would like them to be about the consequences of their decision-making on the academic programs of the college.

Dr. Clark shared that the department has completed paperwork requesting the position be replaced, but had not yet heard back from Dean Anderson, not even to acknowledge receipt of



the request. Because the program is seen as vital to maintaining the credibility of being a liberal arts college, Dr. Clark is ready for a fight:

I'm pretty sure they'll [the administration] say no and if they do, the next question becomes: Do we become a liberal arts college without a presence in all of the subjects in the humanities? If so, do we do that by a decision that's made in the Dean's office or the President's cabinet or is that a conversation that takes place among faculty? I'm personally dedicated to the proposition that such a move will take place on the floor of the faculty. If my colleagues decide we are going to be a liberal arts college without a full presence of the humanities, then there's not much I can do about it but I'll be damned if I'm going to let it happen because of benign neglect, or financial reasons that we never bring forth and discuss, or a decision made by the administration.

**Adequate transparency increases faculty support for decisions made for their institutions.** Dr. Stacy Young and Dr. Riley Allen spoke about the experience at Oliver College during a failed presidential search. Dr. Young noted that the search had been done in a manner contrary to previous searches, when the faculty representatives shared with their colleagues the goings-on of the search committee. They explained that the reason behind this had been made to protect the identities of the candidates who were all sitting presidents at other institutions. However, both Dr. Young and Dr. Allen spoke about the faculty dissatisfaction with the Board's decision to make this a closed search. Dr. Allen shared that the perception among the faculty was "the Board of Trustees were basically headhunting people and the candidates would be brought to campus and presented to us sort of as a fait accompli" without ever being presented the credentials of the candidates.

Though Dr. Young expressed a certain amount of understanding that sitting presidents would hesitate to participate in open searches, she also respected the faculty's insistence on being involved in the presidential search. Dr. Allen actively questioned the decision by the search committee and the Board of Trustees. She worked to resolve the situation and believed the conversations held as a result of the faculty's dissatisfaction with the process actually strengthened the "channels of communication between faculty and the Board of Trustees."

At Underwood and Corona, as well, there have been situations that create opportunities for the faculty to raise their concerns about transparency with the administration and the Board of Trustees. Dr. Kim Lee believed President Williams understood that the faculty at Underwood College wanted to be more involved in the decision-making, that Williams understood President Smith had "ruled so much from on high" and it had "turned people off." All three of the professors at Underwood College agreed the Financial Affairs Committee instituted by President Williams was a step in the right direction, though Dr. Sam Clark admitted that because it "operates outside of the normal governance system" it may not resolve the issues with transparency altogether. Dr. Fran Harris commented that while he believed the faculty on the Financial Affairs Committee were "motivated, ethical people," he was wary about how the faculty had been selected for the committee and believed they were appointed by President Williams rather than elected from the faculty. However, Dr. Clark was encouraged:

I would say there's been an evolution in the last couple of years from a complete imbalance, where there was a top-down administration, to an intentional effort on the part of the current President to be more transparent and more consultative in the decision-making process, thus [more transparent about] the power of the college. I would say that's been marginally successful.

Additionally, Dr. Clark noted that President Williams had selected a faculty member to evaluate certain employment benefits and believed this demonstrated she wanted more faculty input in the decision-making process.

In the view of Dr. Morgan Robinson, the decision-making process has become more transparent and has returned to a level of faculty engagement enjoyed before President Thompson's tenure. Dr. Robinson believes the new president, President Johnson, understands that the faculty are looking to have more involvement again. Dr. Robinson shared how in recent administrative searches, the hiring process was exhaustive and open to anyone who would like to participate. Colleges around the country in these tough financial times are having to make controversial budget decisions, and Corona is no different. Dr. Robinson is comfortable knowing in some instances, there are decisions that need to be made and not all of the information going into those decisions can be shared with the larger faculty.

Dr. Robinson also spoke about a renewed involvement with the alumni, and with the Board of Trustees, since President Thompson left Corona College. Dr. Robinson noted that the morning of our meeting he had been in contact with two Trustees who had wanted some information. Dr. Robinson reflected on the fact that in the past, President Thompson would have questioned the contact, while the current administration was comfortable with it and wanted to have an open-access policy.

Dr. Dylan Lewis's experience with President Johnson's new approach to communication on campus was similar; Dr. Lewis said:

I think most faculty feel like if they are really concerned about something and they need to speak to the President, they would not hesitate to do that. [President Johnson] is also

more present, be it at Faculty Council or faculty chairs' meetings or soliciting information at faculty meetings at large.

Dr. Lewis related the faculty had brought up their concerns over faculty salaries and the increase in the number of administrative positions to President Johnson. President Thompson neglected to address salaries at all and had blamed the growth of the administrative staff on the fact some contracts that had once been faculty had been changed over to staff contracts. At a recent faculty meeting, Dr. Lewis explained that President Johnson not only spoke about the rise in administrative positions over the past decade, but explained the larger picture of why those administrative positions were created:

A lot of it, when it was spelled out, [made sense]. Is Corona way out of line? Not so much. But after six years [with no explanation], the faculty [was frustrated at the lack of information about how these decisions were made]. President Johnson explained it in a very thorough, evidence-based way, saying "here's what's going on" and everybody kind of went, "oh, okay." We got it. Now [the question is] how can we think about this in a more creative way, because we've really got to find a way to bring faculty salaries up. But having the information laid on the table [is important]. Faculty are not that unreasonable.

### **Theme #3: The Extent to Which Administrators Value Faculty Input Influences Faculty Morale and Motivation to Participate in Governance**

**Faculty perceptions of how administrators value shared governance influence their engagement in decision-making.** How an institution valued their shared governance environment, and more specifically how administrators valued their faculty colleagues in the decision-making process, was an important theme emerging from the data. All of the faculty

participants thought that they were a part of the decision-making process at their colleges when it came to the curriculum and academic life of the college. Though two colleges, Underwood and Corona, had experienced former presidents who seemed to reject shared governance, there were indications the current administrations were making efforts to include the faculty in the governance process once again.

Dr. Dylan Lewis eloquently expressed how beneficial it could be to match leadership with the values of an institution and said that “The values of an institution are actually translated into decisions for the school and are guided very strongly by the President.” Dr. Morgan Robinson shared a similar aspiration: “Let’s make sure shared governance is something that’s valued across the system, not just [something we pay] lip service to.” Dr. Kim Lee and Dr. Stacy Young also noted that they believed the administration valued faculty input into decision-making process at their institutions.

However, a few of the faculty still voiced concern with their administrators. Dr. Fran Harris said:

[Administrators] would *say* they place a high value on [shared governance], but I think they place a high value on just a few professors who happen to agree with them. I don’t think the actual value is high. I think they see us as, I guess, pampered professors who don’t work really hard so [the administration] should just do what they want to do.

Dr. Jordan Walker believed administrators were disconnected from the challenges the faculty faced:

This is one of the things [that annoys me] about one of the assistant deans. Every time we see her, she always say such nice things, thanking everyone for their good work on this and on that. I know it is important and good to do things like that, but it comes across as

[fake]. [I just want to tell her to] cut it out. It happens too often; she is too smiley. She offers too many platitudes: [speaking sarcastically] “Oh, we know you work so hard and value you so much...” that we’re going to cut your budget again and we are going to ask you to teach more than you were before. [I want to say] I don’t want to hear your platitudes. You’re asking me to do more work with no additional money whatsoever. I don’t want to engage in shared governance where I would have to engage with her directly all the time.

Dr. Harris, Dr. Walker, and other faculty participants acknowledged that shrinking budgets made it hard to respond to faculty calls for increased salaries. But it was becoming increasingly difficult for some of the faculty to listen to disingenuous excuses as they saw budgets being spent on new non-academic departments, new athletic teams, and growing numbers of administrators.

**Faculty believe that how much administrators value shared governance affects morale.** The data showed faculty involvement, or non-involvement, in the decision-making process affected morale in several ways. Often a faculty participant had prior experiences with shared governance and those experiences shaped their responses.

*How new and expanded responsibilities affects faculty members’ sense of self-worth and increases skepticism of administrators’ value of shared governance.* Some of the faculty reported being overwhelmed with the amount of work they had to do, often with a sense there was more work being added to their lists of responsibilities, sometimes without consultation. Faculty shared a sense that they were being asked to do more, with less, for the same amount of money, which in their eyes equated to less money. Dr. Sam Clark noted:

One of the most pressing issues for me in particular at this point in my career is retirement. I came to the realization about five years ago, that whether or not I was able

to retire, I might not be able to retire with anything other than penury. And part of that had to do *directly* with the leadership, the sort of bullying, self-serving behavior of our previous president [who increased his salary as well as his cabinet's].

Dr. Clark went on to describe other situations with other faculty in her same generation asking the same questions, "Where else am I going to go at this point in my career?" Some of the faculty participants wanted to know what kind of budget cuts their administrations were making. Faculty participants believed senior administrators offered empty assurances of "feeling the pain" of professors, while at the same time demanding more of them, and making no overtures reflecting that the administration did indeed understand the stress the faculty were under.

Dr. Fran Harris, in order to make more money to support his family, teaches courses over and above his regular load. He described the current situation for faculty at Underwood College as being one where the faculty were now being asked "to go out into the schools" to recruit new students, to come up with retention plans, and to "worry about counseling," on top of the academic advising, committee work, academic research, program creation, and other service to the college faculty do in addition to teaching. The response of cabinet members appeared to be unsympathetic; they were reported to have said at a faculty meeting that "faculty are lazy" and to have accused professors of not doing any research, further demoralizing faculty. Dr. Harris summarized "That's the kind of angst we're feeling here on campus now. That we are expendable; they want to run us like a business."

Additionally, Dr. Harris admitted having had high expectations of President Jamie Williams after she took over from Dana Smith, who had proven to be completely dismissive of the shared governance process. One of Dr. Harris's main criticisms of President Williams is the fact that the same cabinet serving under President Smith remained in place at Underwood. The

cabinet had been put together by Smith and included people whom Dr. Clark described as being hired because they were “beholden” to Smith. Dr. Harris said that the same “ill-will” created under Smith’s leadership still existed. This was one of the primary reasons why Dr. Harris believed that things were not any better at Underwood under President Williams.

While Dr. Fran Harris believed low morale did not directly influence his teaching, the consequences of having to work in an apprehensive environment took its toll in other ways, which indirectly effected teaching. Dr. Harris noted:

I’m tired and I think a lot of us are tired. I think how it impacts the teaching is that we’re asked to do more with less and we’re being asked to take on more responsibilities without any remuneration or time release or anything like that; our families suffer, our health suffers, or the classroom suffers. For me personally, that rotates a little bit and I’ve tried to be better about not letting my family suffer but I think we, as faculty, tend to let it impact us personally, emotionally, and physically so that it doesn’t impact our students. We try to protect them, but we are being spread more thinly and it’s based on decisions that they [senior administrators] are making, [for example] because enrollment is down they are pushing those responsibilities on to us.

Additionally, due to the decrease in the number of full-time professors, the faculty participants reported the burden of making sure students graduate and have the courses required for graduation falls to the professors who remain. Some of the courses that need to be taught were capstone experiences, and needed to be facilitated by full-time faculty in order to maintain the rigor established and approved by the full faculty. Dr. Sam Clark shared:

I’m getting requests from students who need this or that particular course in the humanities in order to get into graduate programs. While it doesn’t directly affect my



teaching, as department chair it certainly does. I'm spending an awful lot of time trying to figure out how to put bubblegum and packaging tape together in order to get our students' needs satisfied.

Also, some departments have been told by administrators that there are not funds to hire adjunct instructors, further requiring full-time faculty increase their course loads or find ways they can relieve the load in certain areas so courses in the major are taught by the remaining full-time faculty in the department.

Several faculty, while proud of the tradition of shared governance at their institutions, expressed some wariness as well. While they understood and appreciated the many benefits of faculty involvement in the decision-making process, they also recognized the many responsibilities with it. Notably, the amount of time it takes in serving on committees, as department or division chairs, on ad hoc committees, search committees, and if serving in a leadership capacity, the amount of time spent communicating with faculty colleagues both in the department or division as well as the full faculty through Faculty Council meetings and faculty meetings. In spite of relishing her new role on Faculty Council, Dr. Riley Allen openly spoke of her growing concern as a member of the prestigious group:

Quite frankly the thing I've been really feeling recently is that, and I'm going to be feeling much more this time next year, being division chair and being on Faculty Council is running head-on into my teaching here at the beginning of the semester; particularly this year, since I'm coming back from a month overseas from January Term. [Once] back, I've been working on the final grades for January Term and getting ready for the beginning of the semester, for Faculty Council stuff, plus the four classes I'm teaching this semester. All of that is happening in the same week and a half.

She shared that the faculty across campus were often trying to find time for their own work, their own research. Even finding the time to read professional journals was difficult. Dr. Allen noted that in particular, since Oliver's faculty took such an active role in the shared governance there:

Every one of us wears a lot of different hats, teaching, officially and unofficially advising, writing, doing faculty governance work, there's a lot of it. It can be a little bit of a challenge to cut through the busy-ness to make time for what is actually important and creating a climate in which we are not just a bunch of lemmings rushing around but [to know] we are actually leading a life of the mind here.

Dr. Stacy Young was also very encouraged by the level of participation faculty enjoyed in the decision-making process at Oliver College.

Though wary, in light of big changes happening all of the time in higher education, some of the faculty accepted the process of shared governance. Dr. Kim Lee, a 30-year veteran, had seen many things come about at Underwood, having worked with several presidents and even more deans. Dr. Lee seemed always to keep things in perspective, not showing anxiety over situations stressful to other faculty. He explained:

I think it is always better if you like the people and respect the people you have to work with. We had an earlier dean who I really didn't like very much, and I was department chair. I was able to work with him because I had to work with him, but I wouldn't choose to go out and have a drink with him.

His sense of humor about faculty relationships with administrators was evident as well; Dr. Lee noted:

For me, because I really like the institution and have invested so much of my life in this place and I believe in what we are doing, I would try to do what I am supposed to do and

what I think I should be doing regardless of the person who's president. When President Miller retired and I went through the receiving line, his parting words were, "Well, Kim, we didn't always agree, but you kept me on the right track, and you told me what you thought," and that is how I act. So, I would be involved in shared governance regardless. This type of behavior accepted the situation, whatever it might be, and has served Dr. Lee well. Throughout his career, Dr. Lee served multiple stints as department chair, as well as chair of different faculty committees. Recently though, he has handed "over the reins" to newer faculty, encouraging them to take up the mantle of leadership.

*The ways faculty are hopeful about engaging in shared governance to benefit their institutions and how they think it influences their teaching and interactions with students.* The faculty, without exception, emphasized the admiration they had for their students, and without fail, remarked on being happy at their current institutions. Dr. Kelly Hall showed a genuine excitement to be teaching, and working with administrators who really seemed to listen. Even when there was no quick answer, Dr. Hall believed in the Dean's ability to help the department problem-solve. Dr. Hall had worked at Oliver College for many years, giving her an opportunity to get to know colleagues from across the campus. In order to help the department run smoothly, Dr. Hall shared that she encouraged colleagues to reach out to one another to address issues face-to-face and as they come up, which was her own modus operandi. She was hopeful her leading by example would help to set a precedent.

At Underwood and Corona College, having experienced previous presidents who had shown the faculty little respect and left legacies of poor finances, the current presidents were welcomed. Underwood's President Jamie Williams has been there for several years now and there are faculty who believe some of the changes she instituted have increased the involvement

of faculty in the decision-making process, such as the Financial Affairs Committee. Though far from perfect, there was a sense the faculty, even if they were skeptical, were still hopeful President Williams valued shared governance. Dr. Fran Harris conceded that even though the changes the faculty had most hoped for had not come to fruition, he believed his own dissatisfaction is due to the fact his expectations of President Williams were so high, so hopeful things would improve, and when they did not, it intensified Dr. Harris's disappointment. Dr. Harris recognized that this seemed like an unfair attitude, but it also did not excuse the fact that there were still deep problems in the relationships between faculty and administration, even though he wanted to be optimistic and realistic.

Dr. Morgan Robinson also remains hopeful. After his previous president, President Jody Thompson, left "I think some really smart moves were made in the transition." Corona College brought in a respected retired president to serve in an interim capacity and the college engaged in an open conversation about shared governance with the Board, guided by the interim president. Dr. Robinson and the other faculty from Corona each expressed their excitement over the hiring of Pat Johnson as the new President. One of the things Dr. Robinson has enjoyed since President Thompson left is the interaction he has had with the Trustees and the alumni, which was prohibited before; Dr. Robinson noted, "It's kind of a really neat place to work in that sense. It's fun."

The faculty stated that they made every effort to not let the tensions between faculty and administration over the decision-making process at their colleges affect their teaching and their students. Dr. Stacy Young commented, "I think we do better teaching when there is faculty engagement in the shared governance process." Dr. Sam Clark said that despite the frustrations, she believes:

We continue to be a pretty good school and I'm pretty proud of the students we graduate and what they're able to accomplish in their professional lives and in their graduate programs. In this department, our numbers have dwindled in terms of numbers of majors, for reasons, having to do with administrative decisions.

However, participants also acknowledged that faculty morale did have an effect on teaching. Dr. Dylan Lewis shared, while the effect on teaching "was fairly minimal:"

Faculty did feel beaten down, and feeling beaten down affected the teaching, just the energy you brought to it [the classroom]. I think it would be disingenuous to say it didn't affect it at all, no matter how hard we tried.

Dr. Jordan Walker spoke about recognizing that she had been deeply affected by the tensions created by President Thompson. However, instead of participating in the conversations surrounding Thompson's devastating leadership, Dr. Walker immersed herself in teaching, saying:

I pulled away from more extensive attachment to the community. I separated myself, saying, "Okay, I don't want to deal with some of this. I am going to focus on what I do with students in the classroom."

As someone normally involved in shared governance, Dr. Walker confessed that it was not the ideal response but it was necessary in order to remain focused on the students and teaching.

For Dr. Riley Allen, it comes back to the idea of faculty finding a way to balance all of the roles and responsibilities they have in a shared governance environment. One of the ways Dr. Allen met the challenge was to have open and frank conversations with her students and advisees, making sure they knew what Dr. Allen's availability was in order to help them schedule their time together. Other professors discussed how the service part of their faculty

roles affected their teaching as well. Dr. Clark shared, “The biggest factor for leadership and service here [is the fact we have limited] time and energy because we work very hard and there’s not a lot of [time left over for research and engaging in faculty governance].”

**Faculty have both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations influencing their engagement in shared governance.** Faculty participants discussed several motivations to participate in shared governance at their institutions. Whether a participant believed shared governance was successful or not at his or her college, they described situations that demonstrated their motivation. In this section, I will review both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations emerging in the data.

*Ways faculty are intrinsically motivated to participate in shared governance.* For several faculty members, participation in the decision-making process at their colleges was motivated by an interest in achieving tenure and earning promotions. A common requirement for tenure or promotion to a higher faculty rank is service to the college through committee work or service as a chair of a department or division. Dr. Riley Allen described her motivation for participating in shared governance:

I knew that with tenure [came the responsibility to] step up and start doing more of the governance things. That was kind of when I decided that I was going to go for division chair, I was going to do Faculty Council, because I know the next thing that I’m up for is full professor. The committee that I really am interested in being on is the Appointment and Promotions Committee. But that is for full professors only, so that is way out in the future for me. Going up for full professor, I need to be able to show these are the kinds of things I have done, that I am looking up and beyond my own department into the rest of

the college, that I have a vision for the college and not only for my department in the college.

Dr. Kelly Hall shared that she was motivated to become more engaged in shared governance after being elected to the Curriculum and Academic Policies Committee, a highly influential committee. Participating in the committee showed Dr. Hall how important the faculty voice was, her own voice was: “You always know you’re part of the whole through teaching courses, but I think that was the moment when governance really [made an impression on me].”

Other faculty members have made conscious decisions to participate less in the shared governance responsibilities of the faculty. For some, like Dr. Kim Lee and Dr. Morgan Robinson, that decision is due to the fact they are nearing retirement and their stepping back from the leadership positions opens up those roles to newer faculty members. For others, like Dr. Sam Clark, the increase in administrative functions, such as overseeing the study abroad program, has given her “an excuse to not leap into the fray” of some of the more time-consuming faculty committees.

Some faculty reported their interest in participating in shared governance waxed and waned over time. Dr. Morgan Robinson described himself as “kind of a trusting person, kind of hands-off” when it came to shared governance. Being able to engage in as little or as much shared governance at any given point in his career was important. Dr. Robinson spoke about his comfort with decision-making happening at the administrative and committee level, and his belief that sometimes, shared governance encumbered the speed by which things could be accomplished, giving as an example:

I really don’t care what the art department does, and yet the art department gets to vote on what we do and I get to vote on what they do. That kind of bugs me, because we have a

Curriculum and Academic Policies Committee and that is not a trainee committee, experienced faculty get on that committee. I trust them to make the decisions and I trust their recommendations. Nonetheless, it still goes through the whole faculty. I guess that's really shared governance, and I think that is too much. So that [kind of decision-making] does get kind of in the way, there's too much shared governance here. I trust the committee to do it.

While Dr. Robinson believed in the power and influence of committee work, he was not convinced the large faculty meetings provided value to the shared governance experience and so he rarely attended them. Alternatively Dr. Robinson suggested other matters, such as course engagement hours needed to be discussed at the faculty level but were not. Dr. Robinson thought perhaps the issue was being ignored by the Faculty Council because it was too controversial a topic, because it called in to question certain faculty members' work load when compared to others.

Another intrinsic motivator is the personal satisfaction some of the faculty experience engaging in the decision-making process at their colleges. Simply stated, participating in shared governance, being a part of a team that helps support the mission and work of the college makes Dr. Stacy Young "feel good," and she said that shared governance "matters to me." Dr. Jordan Walker also noted:

As I reflect on my experiences with shared governance over the entire course of my career, I feel that overall, my experiences have been very positive. The shared governance process has resulted in me feeling personally vested in my institution and its future in the highly unstable current world of higher education.



Though Dr. Walker revealed she was not as motivated to participate in shared governance under President Thompson, she still believed that “Shared governance has been very empowering, allowing me to feel I have a way to make a difference in the college.”

*Ways faculty are extrinsically motivated to participate in shared governance.* The faculty themselves provide each other extrinsic motivation to engage in the shared governance process at their colleges. Dr. Dylan Lewis mentioned the strong relationships with faculty colleagues over the years not only provided him additional motivation to participate in the shared governance at Corona College, but “deepened my experience in an interesting sort of way.” Dr. Jordan Walker explained that there was a sense of optimism on the part of the faculty because of the new president, President Johnson. Dr. Walker said, “There’s a sense of having a ‘load off of our shoulders,’ and everybody is breathing again.”

Other concerns about the future of shared governance included the fact the responsibilities of faculty governance were increasingly being shouldered by the faculty who lived nearer to the college. All of the colleges examined in this study are located in small towns in the Midwest. Because of the geographic location of the colleges, it was noted that many of the faculty spouses and partners had jobs in bigger cities near Underwood, Corona, or Oliver Colleges. At Corona for example, Dr. Jordan Walker shared:

We are a campus about 80 miles from a large city. Increasingly, new faculty hires have chosen to reside nearer to the city due to job opportunities for their spouse/partner or for other personal reasons. These commuting faculty spend two to three hours per day on the road and on average are less willing or available to participate in the shared governance structure when that may mean long meetings that result in a late arrival at home or the need to be at Corona on days they do not meet their classes. Thus the pool of faculty

willing and available to participate is diminished and the faculty who continue to [live nearer to the college] take on more of this type of campus involvement.

Dr. Morgan Robinson agreed with this, noting that in some departments almost two-thirds of the faculty do not live in the same town as the college. For Dr. Robinson, this meant the loss of a sense of community among the faculty, and “the climate is pretty autonomous, which I don’t like, but that’s how it is.”

For Dr. Harris, there “seems to be a kind of culture of fear” at Underwood College, saying “We get angry but then we don’t advocate for ourselves. If you go to our faculty meetings, there are only a few people who talk and I’m not sure if [it is not] because people think it’s futile.”

Finally, several faculty discussed the importance of timing when it came to deciding whether or not to take on a leadership role and participate with more responsibility in the shared governance process. Dr. Kelly Hall admitted that she does not always have a “personal drive to strive for governance.” She said:

This role kind of came and I said “Okay, I’m ready to do this.” But I have a life outside of Oliver. It has to be balanced for me. I don’t mind being involved in governance. I’ve been here a long time, so my confidence has grown, but it’s not something I would’ve wanted to do say after six years of being here at Oliver. It’s not like I was saying, “I’m going to take on the world here!” That’s not me. Right now, it is the right time for me to take on this department chair role in particular because of where my family is at, because of where I am at personally. I’ve been asked before and declined because I didn’t think I was ready for it.

#### **Theme #4: The Complexities of Power Influence Faculty Engagement in Governance**

This study focused on the faculty experience with their administrators in the colleges' shared governance environments. Therefore, it is not surprising the theme of power emerged in the data. This section will discuss the findings of this theme by looking at the sub-themes of faculty responses to administrative power, evidence of faculty power, and shared power.

**Faculty responses to administrative power.** Faculty experiences with administrators showed most of the faculty believed the true power in the decision-making process at their institutions rested with the president and the Board.

Some faculty who had unfavorable experiences with previous presidents shared how the current administrations were attempting to improve the relationships and include the faculty in the decision-making process. The professors at both Underwood and Corona College expressed their dissatisfaction with their previous presidents. At Corona College, all three faculty participants expressed their optimism about the new president's early actions, noting President Pat Johnson seems to really want a more open administration. Dr. Dylan Lewis emphasized President Johnson's communication skills, in particular his ability to listen and respond to questions effectively. At Underwood, there have also been signs that President Williams wanted to improve relationships with her faculty. In describing administrative power, Dr. Kim Lee also remarked on how things were changing:

Well, the administration rules, but I do think the faculty has a big voice in what happens from day to day. As I mentioned, all of our committees [make recommendations to the administration] as opposed to really [making decisions]. But I think because the former president, Dana Smith, ruled so much from on high and turned a lot of people off, at this

point, the [current] administration is pretty tuned-in to knowing there has to be a better balance. I think they really are trying to be transparent.

Additionally, Dr. Lee saw the Financial Affairs Committee as one of the ways President Williams was attempting to provide faculty more of a voice in regards to the college budget. Dr. Sam Clark, a colleague of Dr. Lee, shared the opinion. Though Dr. Clark was more skeptical of President Williams's advisors, she said, the President "is making some real sincere efforts to be more consultative."

The faculty who experienced poor administrative leadership described the president, the Board, or the dean as having exerted their authority in either underhanded or heavy-handed manners. In speaking about the relationship between the president and the Board and the amount of power these two stakeholders have, several faculty believed that they prop each other up. Dr. Jordan Walker spoke about President Thompson's relationship with the Board:

Certainly the President has always had a lot of power and I think what the faculty fears the most, is not even the President, but the Board. I don't mean fear as in scary or afraid, but concerned the Board makes decisions [for the college] when they themselves have so little direct contact with the institution. Of course, the President plays a huge role in that, as far as being the middle person, and that was why, one of the reasons at least, there were a lot of concerns with our previous president.

Dr. Walker explained that President Thompson would manipulate information presented to the Board in order to achieve her goals. Then, when she would meet with the faculty, President Thompson would present decisions she had made as being at the behest of the Board.

When it came to committee work, Dr. Walker related an incident in which President Thompson:

...pretty much told the Appointment and Promotions Committee that she was not going to be held to any of our decisions. There was very much a lack of trust. The president [assumed] we couldn't, or that we would be unwilling to, critique or judge members from our faculty because we were faculty. She didn't wait to see how we operated. She just told us, "I make that decision. You can make the recommendation, but I'm going to make the decision."

Dr. Walker believed President Thompson demonstrated her power through confrontation; through what Dr. Dylan Lewis called "bullying behavior." Dr. Walker also believed there were certain members of the Corona College Board who had been aware of President Thompson's previous history and, in fact, liked her more because of it. Dr. Lewis reflected on an instance when President Thompson did overturn a decision of the Appointment and Promotions Committee to deny tenure to a candidate, saying:

Nobody took that decision lightly and people were honest [throughout the process]. The faculty member who was denied tenure appealed. [The committee] stood by our decision. And the President reversed it. She didn't give an explanation. I think it was just a way for her to exert her power again. And not valuing the legitimacy of our process. It was hard. I can't tell you how difficult it is in that department right now.

Because of the influence President Thompson held with the Board, it took the Corona College faculty a great deal of time to convince members of the Board who were willing to listen to step forward and exert the power they had to help facilitate President Thompson's departure. Despite Corona College having the roles and responsibilities clearly laid out for each of the stakeholders in their handbook, Dr. Morgan Robinson shared an example of how President Thompson willfully neglected the document in favor of exerting her own power. Dr. Robinson explained

that President Thompson hired a new faculty member without any input from the department, or any search committee. She announced at a faculty meeting she had hired this person, and the faculty were outraged. Dr. Robinson noted that “There was just flat out anger [about] what was going on here, in terms of the administration butting into faculty turf.”

Participants from Underwood College also considered their previous president, Dana Smith, a top-down leader and believed the power of the institution rested within the administration. All of the faculty participants agreed that they had academic freedom, but administrative decisions were made about programs without any consultation with the faculty. Dr. Sam Clark described President Smith’s “vision of faculty governance” as:

[The President was going to decide] what we’re going to do and then we will tell you about it. That was on every level, from strategic plans in which the faculty were explicitly excluded, which he would brag about, to changing the names of our benchmark institutions against whom we compare ourselves regarding faculty salaries to you name it. There was no shared governance.

New programs were created by the administration with little to no consultation with the faculty.

Dr. Fran Harris talked about the introduction of a new athletic program, and said, “There was a *hint* of discussion in as much as the administration said ‘Yes, well your input is wanted....’ But it was never going to be relevant. They were going to do whatever they wanted to do.” Similar to what happened at Corona College, President Smith used the Board as an excuse to run the college the way he wanted to run things. President Smith hired whomever he wanted to, promoted people into positions some faculty believed they were not qualified for, and created an environment assuring his ultimate authority and security. It was even suggested that President Smith hired people who he knew would have a sense of obligation to the office of the president.

This sense of complete autonomy extended to the office of academic affairs. Dr. Harris noted that the Dean at the time also neglected faculty input, not even seeking it, when hiring associate deans.

**Evidence of faculty power.** The faculty participants' experience with their own power in the decision-making process demonstrated that, at each of their institutions, they provided meaningful, constructive, and valuable insights to help make their colleges stronger academically and benefit the entire community. The matters universally perceived by the faculty participants to be primarily the domain of the faculty included curriculum and instruction as well as faculty appointments, tenure, and promotion.

Though Corona College had experienced great upheaval under their previous president, eventually the faculty's collective voice was heard, and, as Dr. Dylan Lewis shared:

The faculty felt shared governance worked. The faculty felt they raised their hands and said, "We have a problem here. Here's our problem." In that instance, both the President and the Board seemed to listen to the arguments and came to the point of agreement with the arguments and we moved ahead. It is one of the only specific instances I can think of where Corona College had a real breakdown in shared governance. Then the issue was raised in a respectful and straightforward manner and shared governance was restored.

Dr. Jordan Walker also noted that the "faculty have a lot of power here.... Even if they [recognize] that [administrators] in power always want more power." Faculty are always included on search committees, and at the time of the search for the next president, Dr. Walker said that the Faculty Council was asked specifically to elect representatives to serve on that committee and those "individuals played a large part" on the presidential search committee.

Dr. Morgan Robinson believed that because faculty were respected and understood the need for confidentiality in some cases, administrators included them in the decision-making process. Even though Dr. Robinson sometimes expressed a sense of frustration with “too much shared governance,” he really respected the decisions being made by the committees. Dr. Robinson did not see what value there was to having a larger faculty vote on things already approved at the committee level.

Finally, one of the most important results of the years spent with President Thompson, who did not value the shared governance model, was how the Corona College community took the opportunity to discuss what shared governance meant there. It “was a really difficult thing to go through,” Dr. Dylan Lewis noted, realizing “we did not have power was humbling to say the least, and dispiriting.” Consequently, the faculty and the Board spent time articulating a policy on shared governance to benefit the college in the years to come.

At Underwood and Oliver Colleges, the participants shared their experiences as department chairs and the influence and power those positions have. Dr. Fran Harris explained that it was important to be collaborative as chair, to understand the decisions needing to be made would affect everyone in the department. However, Dr. Harris also acknowledged that it could sometimes be frustrating when dealing with colleagues, and specifically mentioned the difficulty in setting the academic schedule for the department. Dr. Sam Clark and Dr. Kim Lee also experienced this frustration during their times as department chairs. Everyone stressed how important it was to “lead by example” and one example was that each of the participants, when asking colleagues to teach during unpopular times, would also assign themselves to teach during those times. Dr. Clark also talked about the responsibility the chair has when it comes to submitting reports. Though she makes sure to request input from department colleagues, Dr.



Clark said, “In the end, I take responsibility for the product. I have to turn in something. The paperwork is necessary for [reaccreditation]. If it is not done, [as department chair,] it’s my head on the block.”

The other evidence of faculty power came out of the committee work for which they are responsible. Though each of the Underwood faculty noted that these committees served as recommending bodies only, Dr. Kim Lee believed “faculty have real ownership, and are very willing to do it.” Also, Dr. Lee enjoys getting to know other people through the committee work and also said that “it is a way of having a voice and making a difference.” In particular, Dr. Lee shared that the Appointment and Promotions Committee was recently looking at faculty compensation and had made recommendations resulting ultimately in addressing the compression issues at his institution.

The faculty at Oliver College are included in the decision-making process through committee work as well. Dr. Kelly Hall shared:

I think it is good, because you learn a lot about your institution, and other parts of the college as a whole. We tend to stick around our own divisions, but when you are involved in committees that go cross campus you are with the sciences, you are with the humanities. I think that is really important that faculty become more involved in governance because it gives us perspective, in terms of knowing what other departments need. Everyone is really good at looking at what they perceive as their needs, but needs are campus-wide.

Dr. Stacy Young emphasized faculty involvement on committees and said that through committees, the faculty’s voice was not only heard but also respected. Dr. Young also shared that, recently, a department had put together a proposal to request renovations to the building in

which they are housed. Dr. Young said, while the decision had not been made at the time of this study, it looked as though the proposal would be approved.

Both Dr. Kelly Hall and Dr. Riley Allen have served on one of the most important faculty committees at any college, Faculty Council. At Oliver College, three of the seats on this Council are held by the academic division chairs; the President and the Dean also sit on Faculty Council. Though participation is time-consuming, both Dr. Allen and Dr. Hall said that representation on the Faculty Council gave the faculty considerable power and influence, not only with the Dean and the President, but as Dr. Riley Allen pointed out, increasingly with the Board of Trustees as well.

Finally, though tensions exist between the dean and faculty, professors at both Oliver College and at Corona believed the faculty had power in their relationships with their deans. Dr. Dylan Lewis said that he was confident if he shared a concern with the Dean, the concern would be forwarded to the President. Dr. Morgan Robinson had served on a committee with the Dean, reviewing the policy on replacing faculty positions. With so much at stake, Dr. Robinson believed the Dean took into consideration all of the feedback provided by the faculty on the committee. Ultimately, Dr. Robinson noted that the decisions made by the Dean reflected the value the Dean placed on faculty input. Other evidence of faculty power include an example from Dr. Stacy Young, who was able to create her own job title in order to help her be more effective in her role serving the assessment needs of the college. Dr. Young noted that she believed the Dean truly valued the faculty at Oliver College and the faculty had a great sense of power and ownership in the institution.

**Faculty engagement in shared power.** All of the participants recognized shared governance requires all of the stakeholders to be involved in the decision-making.

Faculty members, for their part, respect that administrators have a responsibility for making certain decisions and sometimes the information leading to the decision cannot be widely shared. They recognized senior administrators are faculty members, shared the values of the faculty, and understand the concerns of the faculty. The governance roles of administration and of professors are viewed as complementary, having legitimate spheres of authority that need to respect each other. (Burbules, 2013, p. 2)

Dr. Kelly Hall noted that the power balance at Oliver College was “fairly equitable.” Dr. Morgan Robinson said that the faculty he worked with expected to be “at the table” though he understood there were times decisions could not be put in front of the whole faculty because of confidentiality concerns. Dr. Sam Clark spoke about these qualities of shared governance as well, but admitted at Underwood:

I don't think we are terribly good at shared governance in any sense of the word. It's not as bad as it used to be when Dana Smith was President, where [the general sense was that] “We will tell you what we decided,” which was Smith's version of *shared* governance. But the mutual working together important to shared governance isn't there.

Dr. Jordan Walker, in defining shared governance, said it did not mean all of the stakeholders “have the same responsibilities, or an equal say in every decision being made, because there are some areas where one group has more expertise than another.” To help identify these areas, several participants also recognized that it was important there be conversations about what shared governance meant for their particular institutions. Dr. Walker and Dr. Dylan Lewis spoke about an ad hoc committee on college governance established to review shared governance. Dr. Walker explained:

Because of how bad things had gotten, the whole idea of the ad hoc committee was to revisit the governing documents for Corona College and talk about what was meant in those places in the documents to achieve a better joint understanding between administration, the Board of Trustees, and the faculty.

For Dr. Morgan Robinson, the assumption had always been shared governance “was just the way things were done around here so I, quite frankly and very naïvely, just never thought about it.”

Dr. Kelly Hall believed shared governance:

...is delicate because, like a democracy, you can get extremists who will sort of get things worked out of shape. If you're not careful, I think that can also happen with shared governance. You have to sort of be on guard for naysayers, because those kinds of things are insidious. If you let negativism bore its way into a corner where you can't see it, then all of a sudden, it will become an epidemic. Then everybody is [upset]. That's not healthy. It's not healthy for the people. It's not healthy for the institution. It's not healthy for our students.

Dr. Riley Allen spoke about the conversations at Oliver College, which she believed helped to “define what shared governance is for us and in continuing to feel good about how we do it here.”

There were several examples in the data demonstrating decisions that had been made using the shared governance process. Some of those decisions are represented in other parts of this chapter, including building projects, Faculty Council, as well as in the conversations happening at the colleges about shared governance itself. There were two examples I wanted to share here as well. I wanted to use examples of decision-making including students as

stakeholders, a group not mentioned as participants in the shared governance process as often as were the administration, faculty, and Board of Trustees.

The first is about the changes made to the Community Life Committee at Oliver College, which Dr. Stacy Young was a part of and which is briefly mentioned elsewhere in this paper as well:

I chaired a committee that is a combination of faculty and students called Community Life, which deals with issues and policies that intersect between academics and student life outside of the classroom. That's the uniqueness with that committee, because it also involves students. We worked on student policies, including one academic policy—the honor code. Then we worked on other policies, like harassment, and so on, that are student-directed issues.

This committee originally included nearly 30 people, from all of the various stakeholders including the president, the dean of students, faculty members, and students. Working together, and having hard conversations, the committee was restructured so that in the future, this committee would be able to discuss issues in greater detail and with more confidentiality because of the reduction in the number of members. Dr. Young noted:

The committee now deals with much more important issues. Now the president of the student body can talk to a couple of faculty and they can be honest with each other in a way one might not be able to in a room of 30 people.

The second example, provided by Dr. Morgan Robinson, involved the creation of a new academic program at Corona College. Dr. Robinson shared:

What comes to mind is that we have a very active international program and I think 50% of our students [leave campus to study] in another country at some point during their four

years here. We had an opportunity to develop a program, or expand the program in China. [However, we knew] it would attract a different kind of student. I think we do a really excellent job of asking various constituents for their insights, and so faculty were asked to travel to China to explore programs; we connected with alumni; we polled students in terms of their interest. The net was very wide on this. The program got approved and we were able to get our finances. I think it really demonstrated shared governance.

At Underwood, Dr. Kim Lee spoke about faculty service on committees as representative of the ways in which shared governance transpired. The strongest example of shared governance was the Financial Affairs Committee, though an institutional committee created by the current President, Jamie Williams. Though the committee does not have any decision-making authority, and there is a question about how the faculty representatives are selected, the committee does have representation from a variety of stakeholders. However, because of the power held by the different members, including President Williams, the college's Vice President of Finance, and faculty representatives, this committee has an enormous amount of influence in the decision-making process.

In general, the way the Underwood faculty described their experiences with the decision-making process seemed to indicate they did not believe that they followed all of the traditional tenets of shared governance. Dr. Sam Clark shared:

This is the only institution I have deep experience with, so it just seems to me that whatever shared governance *might* mean, it *should* mean something about when there are difficult financial conversations that need to take place, the faculty need to be a part of

that. If sacrifices are to be made, they need to be made on both sides of the table, both administrative and faculty. I don't think folks quite understand that.

There are, in fact, examples demonstrating faculty have been purposefully excluded from conversations traditionally inclusive of faculty perspectives and input. Dr. Clark spoke about how the previous president, Dana Smith, prohibited faculty from participating in the strategic planning process. As a result of being excluded from the process, years later when the administration tried to institute one of the items in the strategic plan, under President Williams, the faculty were skeptical of the program. The faculty questioned the necessity of such a program and were uncertain the outcomes could be met with current resources. It appeared that President Williams countered, asking the faculty what it was they wanted, to which the faculty replied it was their sense the program was untenable as structured and the faculty wanted it to go away. I asked Dr. Clark directly: "Do you think Underwood uses shared governance in its decision-making process?" She replied:

On paper, we sort of do [have shared governance], yes. In terms of practice, it's been more off then on over the last 21 years. The President and the cabinet consider themselves as having the governance role and the role of the faculty is to teach classes. With the exception of allocating benefits, the faculty have not had much else to do with shared governance beyond that.

## CHAPTER 6

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

Higher education publications, such as *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Ed*, often have articles regarding shared governance offering a variety of opinions on what is working and what is not working about governance at colleges all across America. On January 5 of 2015, an article written by two former presidents appeared in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*'s Commentary section called "Toward a Shared Vision of Shared Governance." *Inside Higher Ed* conducted a survey of college presidents which generated a recent article (March 13, 2015) about how the results show presidents wanting more say in the hiring decisions of faculty at their colleges. Readers enjoy exposure not only to the opinions of the journalists who write the articles, but to the opinions of other readers, who pepper the comments sections with advice and feedback both thoughtful and sarcastic.

Recent issues provide evidence of presidents and boards at small private liberal arts colleges acting unilaterally when making decisions affecting the entire campus community. In particular, when Sweet Briar College's Board of Directors announced its decision to close the college at the end of this 2014-2015 academic year, several faculty interviewed about the news expressed deep dissatisfaction with not just the decision but the process by which the decision was made. In an article in *The Washington Post*, a professor, Dr. Ashbrook, was quoted as saying:

The college's decision to close Sweet Briar without giving alumnae, faculty and students the opportunity to help develop a viable plan to save the collage is unconscionable.



We knew the school was in trouble, but not to this degree. If the administration and board had been more forthcoming and told the alumnae and faculty we were in this much trouble, I am sure we would have seen the same level of engagement as the Save Sweet Briar movement, but with more time to turn us around. (Svrluga, 2015, paras. 14-17)

Situations like Sweet Briar's, in which the board and president act alone, are distressing for the faculty, staff, and students at colleges where they occur, but also raise alarms at other institutions that profess a commitment to a shared governance form of decision-making.

The time I spent with the faculty participants provided a wealth of information on their experiences and their relationships with college administrators. The participants revealed examples demonstrating effective shared governance at their institutions but also cases in which administrators neglected to include all of the stakeholders in the decision-making process. In this chapter, I will review each theme, discuss the implications to shared governance at small private liberal arts colleges, and also present recommendations for future research.

## **Conclusions**

As noted in Chapter 3, Crotty (1998) wrote about how knowledge is constructed by the learner, "the individual mind." In this heuristic study, it was important for me to recognize the individual participants' meaning-making as a preamble to the discussion of the phenomenon. Individual faculty experiences demonstrated how the level of their engagement in the decision-making process at their institutions deepened their understanding of shared governance. Their experiences also helped them to construct what shared governance meant for them.

The goal of using a heuristic phenomenological methodology was to create a breadth of the essence of the phenomenon of what it means to be a faculty member at a college using shared governance. In thinking about the themes presented in this paper, I also considered how the

faculty participants offered their perceptions and constructed and made meaning out of their experiences to help them understand shared governance at their institutions.

**Theme #1: The Relationships between Faculty and Their Administrators Influence the Level of Faculty Engagement in Shared Governance**

The faculty who participated in this study reported a variety of experiences with their administrators and how those relationships influenced their participation in shared governance. Since the faculty I spoke with had all held leadership positions as chairs of departments, divisions, committees, etc. I knew these were participants who had an intimate experience working with administrators at their colleges. Not only that, the faculty participants served as liaisons between other faculty colleagues and the administration, primarily the president and the dean.

Previous research (Balkun, 2011; Crellin, 2010; Levin, 2006; Middlehurst, 2004; Van Ameijde et al., 2009; Tinberg, 2009; Welsh & Metcalf, 2003) showed how changing economic realities for postsecondary education are affecting the relationships between faculty and administration at colleges and universities all across America. How institutions with a shared model of governance address these changing realities at their colleges means that all of the stakeholders need to be involved in the decision-making process. Burbules (2013) wrote, “Shared governance is a matter of relationships based on mutual respect and trust” (p. 3). While several faculty participants believed they had strong relationships with their administrations, it was also apparent that other faculty thought they had fractured relationships.

The faculty at Oliver College provided examples of experiences which demonstrated successful shared governance and added to their understanding of it. Even when faced with a situation in which the faculty believed their role in the process was diminished, the relationships

established between the faculty and administration allowed them the opportunity to raise their concerns. At Corona College, though the process took several years, the faculty see the institution returning to its pre-President Thompson days of governance, when faculty and the administration worked together to make decisions for the college.

In contrast, the faculty at Underwood College reported that relationships between faculty and administration were not good. Even with a new president, Jamie Williams, relationships languish because of the damage suffered under President Smith. Burbules (2013) noted, “There is a self-fulfilling dynamic here: treating people as untrustworthy adversaries makes them regard you that way in return—and so the general climate between faculty and administrators gets worse” (p. 3). I believe this is the dynamic existing at Underwood College. President Williams’s efforts towards transparency have helped but have not made a significant enough difference because the way the college’s governing documents are written, setting up relationships between faculty and administration in which the faculty are subservient to the administration rather than equal partners in the governance of the college.

## **Theme #2: Faculty Value Communication and Transparency and Recognize How It Influences Their Participation in Decision-Making**

Having a strong governing document detailing the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder in the shared governance environment is important. However, without an open line of communication, the document will not be (as the cliché goes) “worth the paper it’s written on.” Balkun (2011) wrote:

*Communication does not necessarily go both ways.* There can be an expectation on the part of administrators that faculty leaders will keep them informed about activities and plans, but there is not necessarily a reverse expectation. Faculty can be kept in the dark,

and requests for information may be answered vaguely if at all. This barely disguised paternalism can be an easy trap, since it seems to put the onus on administrators to produce results. However, it can also result in a lack of confidence on the part of one's constituents when faculty leadership is kept in the dark, and it makes planning nearly impossible. (p. 566)

Faculty participants were not unreasonable when it came to their expectations of administrators' transparency. Many of the faculty understood and appreciated the fact that there were times when information could not be shared with faculty.

However, the expectations themselves were different at each of the colleges because of the governing documents. At Oliver and Corona Colleges, the faculty expected there to be open dialogues about decisions to be made at the colleges. Faculty participants at Oliver and Corona believed they strongly influenced the decision-making process, even if the "ultimate decision" was not the faculties'. At Underwood, the participants shared the faculty had no expectations they would be included in the decision-making process. Though they are able to make recommendations on certain matters, both Dr. Clark and Dr. Harris believed the faculty were not taken seriously and provided examples of the faculty being purposefully excluded from the process.

At Oliver College, there were open and frank conversations happening between administration and faculty, among faculty colleagues whether interdepartmentally or departmentally, as well as with the students. Corona College faculty participants described how the campus climate was returning to one in which faculty believed they were a part of the decision-making conversations, specifically in regards to the new president, though there was still some question about the transparency of decisions being made in the dean's office.

### **Theme #3: The Extent to Which Administrators Value Faculty Input Influences Faculty Morale and Motivation to Participate in Governance**

Talking with the faculty participants, it was clear to me that they wanted to participate in shared governance. The participants reflected upon their previous experiences and their present situations, and also discussed their future roles as members of shared governance at their institutions. Even those who were considering retirement valued and respected the responsibilities faculty have in the decision-making process and were interested in supporting newer faculty as they developed those skills. Lewis (2011) wrote, “Through faculty governance, faculty has a voice to respond in the service of the institution’s missions, goals, and objectives; improve the institutional effectiveness, [and] act as the moral and intellectual guide for higher education” (p. 34).

Faculty participants expected their administrators to also value faculty involvement in shared governance, and for the most part, the faculty believed administrators respected faculty oversight of the curriculum and instruction at their colleges. While there were instances of the administration creating new non-academic programs without including or taking into consideration input from the faculty, decisions relating directly to the academic life of the college remained largely in the hands of the faculty.

Administration respect for faculty roles and responsibilities in the decision-making process was not the only factor that influenced faculty morale and motivation. It is important to note that faculty at each of the institutions, no matter how strong the relationships were between faculty and administration, shared a sense of being overwhelmed with the workload involved in participation in shared governance. In addition to their teaching and research, faculty are charged with advising and committee work; leadership roles assumed in order to make sure faculty play a

part in shared governance constitute even more work hours. All of the faculty participants in this research study served in these additional capacities. I knew and purposefully chose professors who were faculty leaders to better understand their experiences in the shared governance environment at their colleges. I understand that their choosing to be faculty leaders demonstrated their motivation to participate in shared governance.

#### **Theme #4: The Complexities of Power Influence Faculty Engagement in Governance**

Block McLaughlin (2004) wrote, “In higher education, central authority is suspect and collaboration and collegiality are sacred values, [but it is necessary for] college and university presidents [to] also operate in a third area, *governance*” (p. 5). The faculty participants largely agreed that the “ultimate authority” in the decision-making process at their institutions rested with the president and the board. However, all were skeptical that administrators were able to make decisions that would benefit the entire campus without involving the faculty.

Power was distributed among the stakeholders in the shared governance environment at Oliver and Corona Colleges. Even Underwood College’s governing document gave the faculty there the ability to make recommendations to the administration about decisions being made for the college through their committees and Faculty Council. As the faculty participants shared their experiences, it was clear power in governance would be an important theme.

In particular, I am reminded of my conversation with Dr. Dylan Lewis, who shared that, for him, it came down to the differences between power and strength. In considering his comments, I thought about Cicero (n.d.), who said, “Ability without honor is useless.” It was not surprising to hear about the suspicions faculty participants had about their administrations at both Corona and Underwood. Both Jody Thompson and Dana Smith created a deep division between faculty and administration when they served as presidents, which left a legacy of distrust. The

boards, too, are culpable in the hiring of these presidents. In particular, President Thompson arrived at Corona College with a history of creating divisions between faculty and administrators. Though she was seen as someone who would be able to grow the college's endowment and rein in the budget, the discord created by neglecting the shared governance process, making decisions without faculty input, effectively ended any type of institutional buy-in on the part of the faculty.

President Thompson's actions moved the Corona College faculty to respond aggressively in order to regain their own power. President Dana Smith at Underwood had the full backing of the board and created a cabinet of administrators who were obligated, either through personal favors or fear of job loss, to back the decisions he made. Additionally, the governing document at Underwood explicitly states the faculty committees are "recommending" bodies only and the faculty believed their only real power is in making curricular decisions, though even those decisions are challenged when it comes to allocating resources.

### **Implications**

This study has particular implications for the faculty, staff, and administration at small, private liberal arts colleges. It may seem as though the unsuccessful examples of shared governance are limited to the failed leadership of the president. However, I think the clearest implication of this study is for the stakeholders at colleges who have or want to have a shared governance model of decision-making to come together and commit or recommit to the principles of shared governance at their institutions.

I would suggest the makeup of this group be composed of members of the board; the president; the academic dean; another representative of the cabinet; the faculty, both leaders as well as junior faculty; and students, both alumni and current. Additionally I would recommend

other employees of the college be invited to participate in the conversations as well. Though technically lower-level administrators and staff are not considered a part of the traditional group of stakeholders in shared governance as identified by the AAUP, many institutions have employee leadership councils who are meant to represent their needs to senior administrators and faculty. Decisions made at colleges affect everyone, including these employees, many of whom are intelligent, thoughtful, passionate about, and committed to the institutions where they work.

Gayle, Tewarie, & White (2011) wrote, “Effective governance provides institutional purpose, clarifies strategic direction, identifies priorities, and exerts sufficient control to manage outcomes” (p. 1). But if the last decade has shown anything, it is that institutional purposes change, strategic directions may need to be adjusted, and priorities evolve. I would suggest the group reviewing shared governance not only be diverse in its membership but also commit to keeping the conversation a part of the campus culture. Making the governing document a living record of the value each constituent group places on the concepts of shared governance could work to assure its success. Moreover, continuing conversations about shared governance recognizes the need for flexibility when it comes to decision-making. A college whose community is so engaged in *how* decisions are made might be more agile when it comes *making* the decisions.

Another implication of this study is a recommendation to college administrators. Van Ameijde, Nelson, Billsberry, & van Meurs (2009) noted, “Traditional principles of academic leadership and collegial forms of governance have been rapidly replaced by management principles adopted from the private sector” (p. 764). It would be wise for college administrators to recognize there is a perception from the faculty that administrators are using these management principles and the faculty are skeptical of this practice. Whether or not the use of a



more corporate infrastructure and the language that defines it is an effective strategy, one thing is certain: administrators need to have a conversation with faculty as they restructure administration along these lines. Inviting faculty into any conversation having to do with the structure of the institution they have committed their lives to working for might help create a stronger infrastructure, a more collegial relationship, as well as the potential for creative ideas.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Since I first considered the question of the faculty experience in a shared governance environment, I have been contemplating research that could be done to further understand what is successful shared governance. Below, I present five recommendations:

- 1) I think it would be useful to do a case study of an institution where shared governance appears to be working according to the AAUP Statement on Government of College and Universities. It would involve surveys and interviews of board members, administrators, faculty, and students; observations of student government, faculty, Faculty Council, cabinet, and board meetings; and access to governing documents and meeting minutes. Understandably, this kind of access would be difficult to obtain. However, I believe such a close study of an institution might prove beneficial to the larger postsecondary community using shared governance.
- 2) In the course of this study, I interviewed faculty who had served with several different presidents and deans over the course of their careers. Another recommendation for further research would be to study how their perceptions of shared governance changed over time. It would be worth comparing how and if their perceptions of governance were affected by the leadership style of administrators or by their own growth in understanding the process of shared governance.

- 3) A third study would be to examine closely and compare the motivations to engage in shared governance of both faculty and administrators. I would recommend this study in order to provide more information on how to engage in the process of shared governance, and provide more understanding of what motivates or discourages each group in the shared governance process.
- 4) Additionally, a similar phenomenological study to this one, on the lived experience of administrators with their faculty would add to the discussion of shared governance. This kind of “companion” study would open the conversation up to greater understanding of the perceptions that administrators have of the faculty members and faculty leaders with whom they work.
- 5) Finally, early on in the research process, in discussing the idea for this study with my dissertation advisor, we considered looking at how the relationships between faculty and administrators in a shared governance environment affected student outcomes. This is still an important area for future research. Being able to understand if there are any consequences to student retention, learning, graduation at colleges, etc. because of effective or ineffective relationships between faculty and administration would provide enormous insights into the usefulness of shared governance.

### **Final Reflection**

When I asked faculty for a reflection on their experience participating in my research study, I received the poem, *The Real Work* by Wendell Berry, from Dr. Dylan Lewis. I wrote back, thanking him for sharing it; as someone who loves poetry, it was a nice surprise to receive in my inbox. Almost immediately, Dr. Lewis replied saying it had actually been meant for a different person. Laughing, I replied and suggested that it seemed like an appropriate response.

Dr. Lewis agreed, and so I add it here because I believe its message reveals how the work continues, even as I complete the study:

*The Real Work* by Wendell Berry

It may be that when we no longer know what to do  
We have come to our real work.  
And when we no longer know which way to go  
We have begun our real journey.

The mind that is not baffled is not employed.

The impeded stream is the one that sings.

As I explored the topic of shared governance, my experiences deeply influenced my perceptions. One thing has always remained clear—academics, for the most part, are deeply loyal to their institutions and more specifically, their students. Gayle, Tewarie, & White (2011) wrote, “Successful governance also depends on the extent of agreement concerning institutional mission and the degree of consensus as to implications of institutional culture” (p. 1). As someone with more experience on the staff side, but with a deep appreciation for the faculty I have worked with, I believe it is vital for administrators and faculty to work together to understand and respect the mission of the college. I believe in doing so, decisions can be made that bolster the mission and do not diminish the college’s identity, an identity that, in all likelihood, is what drew both the faculty and administrators to the college in the first place.

It is important for colleges to recognize how shared governance can only be successful if there are conversations among the stakeholders about what shared governance means to the college, and what are the roles and responsibilities of each of the groups. Not only is it important to reiterate the mission of an institution and how the mission is served when the community is engaged in thoughtful and influential decision-making, but emphasizing the mission will also

help shape the conversations themselves. Valuing the process of shared governance and honoring the importance of the voices in the room may lead to better and more creative decision-making, and also may increase the likelihood of agreement on the final decision. It is not possible for everyone to have the results they want, but it is possible for faculty to know their administrators value their insights, consider their arguments, and really listen to all the voices in the room.

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## APPENDIX A

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS AND QUESTIONS

**Title of Study:** The Lived Experience of College Faculty in a Shared Governance Environment

**Investigator:** Liz Glodek

#### INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

There will be three interviews employed as a part of collecting the data appropriate for heuristic phenomenological research (Moustakas, 1990):

- 1) An informal conversational interview that will rely on a natural exchange of ideas that may generate additional questions and topics to consider for the research study.
  - a. This interview will happen either by phone or in person and last for approximately 45 minutes.
- 2) The general interview guide that will outline a set of issues or topics to be explored that might be shared with participants.
  - a. This will be emailed to participants ahead of the third interview.
- 3) The semi-structured open-ended interview will include questions that all research participants will be asked. The questions will be purposeful and consistently asked of all participants. (Patton, 1990)
  - a. This will be an in person interview to last for approximately 1 hour.

Participation will last for approximately four weeks and will include at least five points of contact: 1) initial contact/introduction of the project and informed consent; 2) the first 45 minute informal interview; 3) the emailed general interview guide; 4) the 1 hour semi-structured open-ended interview; and 5) participant validity/clarity. The first contact will be an email which will provide more information on the project and include this informed consent form for participant review. To perform the participant validity, participants will be provided a transcript of their interview, which they will be able to check for accuracy and clarity. This may include a final interview if needed. An optional one-page participant reflection will be solicited via email from the primary researcher about a week following the final interview. This reflection will support triangulation and consistency of information as recommended by Patton (1990).

The primary researcher will allow participants the option to leave the research study at any point in the process.

The primary researcher will visit participants in their offices or other appropriate location and anticipates being able to coordinate travel so that she can meet (separately) with faculty participants who work at the same institution on the same day as much as possible.

At the start of each interview, the primary researcher will turn on the digital audio-recorder before commencing with the interview.

## **INTERVIEWER SCRIPTS**

### **Forty-Five Minute Informal Conversational Interview**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The purpose of this interview is to have an informal conversation about the purpose of my research study and get to know you a little bit more. This study is about understanding the faculty experience of working at a college using a shared governance model of institutional governance. I want to understand your perspectives on your experiences working with college administrators and leaders; I want to understand your challenges and concerns to help better understand your experiences. This interview will last approximately forty-five minutes. Do you have any questions before we begin?

### **Email with the General Interview Guide for the One Hour Semi-Structured Interview**

Dear Name,

Thank you, again, for agreeing to participate in the study and for your time recently when we met for our first interview. It was nice to meet you. Based on the informal interviews, at this point, I am sharing the general interview guide that will help to shape our conversation when we next meet, DATE.

As ever, if you have questions or concerns, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Liz Glodek, MFA  
Drake University  
School of Education  
Candidate, Doctorate in Education Leadership  
[elizabeth.glodek@drake.edu](mailto:elizabeth.glodek@drake.edu)  
917/991-4211

### **One Hour Semi-Structured Interview**

It's nice to see you again. Do you have any questions before we begin about the general interview guide I sent? This interview will last approximately one hour.

### **Final Follow-Up Interview (If Needed)**

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me a final time. There were some items from our last meeting that I wanted to review with you to make sure I accurately captured your responses. Do you have any questions before we begin? This interview will last approximately XX minutes (will vary but not more than ½ hour).

## **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

### **Forty-Five Minute Informal Conversational Interview Questions**

- 1) Tell me about yourself: academic discipline; how many years have you been a professor; have you always worked at this institution; how long have you been tenured?
- 2) What is your experience serving on committees at your institution? Have you ever been chair of a committee? Please describe any other leadership positions you've held where you were in contact with college administration.
- 3) In your own words, what does shared governance mean?
- 4) Please describe your college's governance structure. Would you be able to provide me with a copy of the Faculty Handbook? (if it's not available publicly on the college's Web site)
- 5) Has your college ever had a conversation to discuss what shared governance looks like at your college?
- 6) Has your college ever had a conversation to discuss and agree on what the roles of each constituent group are at your college?
- 7) What value do you think your dean/AVP, president, board place on faculty input in the decision-making process for the college—as it relates to faculty appointments and tenure; current academic programming; student life; new programs; budgeting?
- 8) Have there been recent decisions made for the college by the dean/AVP, president, or board where the faculty was asked for their input? Were they a part of the formal decision-making process? Why do you believe they were (or were not)?
- 9) Have there been recent decisions made for the college by the dean/AVP, president, or board where the faculty was not included in the decision-making process, not even for their input? Why do you believe they were (or were not)?

### **General Interview Guide for the One Hour Semi-Structured Interview**

The final version of this is to be determined, based on data collected through the informal conversations. Below are listed some anticipated questions for the hour long interview.



### **One Hour Semi-Structured Interview Questions**

- 1) What is the overall power balance at your institution?
- 2) What role does the dean/AVP serves in the shared governance at your college? The president? The faculty in general?
  - a. What do you see as each person/group's level of responsibility or authority?
- 3) How does the level of faculty engagement in the decision-making process at your college impact
  - a. the teaching there?
  - b. the learning there?
  - c. the general campus climate?
- 4) What is the effect of decisions made at your college if/when the faculty are not involved in the decision-making?
  - a. whether a current or introduction of a new program
  - b. about the budget
- 5) What is your relationship like with the dean/AVP? With the president? With other faculty?
- 6) How do you think these relationships influence your engagement in shared governance at your college?
- 7) How do you think your perceptions influence your engagement with administrators at your college?
- 8) What is the faculty's relationship to the dean/AVP and president? With each other?
- 9) How do you think their relationships influence their engagement in shared governance at your college?
- 10) How do you think their perceptions influence their engagement with administrators at your college?
- 11) What is an example of how you have engaged in the shared governance model?
- 12) What was your experience like with the process itself, in particular with your dean/AVP, president, other faculty leaders?
- 13) What do you think is working or is positive about how shared governance works at your college?
- 14) What do you think is not working about how shared governance works at your college?
- 15) Tell me about any other concerns or issues you see with how shared governance works at your college.

### **Final Follow-Up Interview Questions**

These questions will be determined by what transpires in the previous interviews.

**OPTIONAL - Email Solicitation for a Participant Reflection**

Dear Name,

Thank you, again, for participating in the study and for your time throughout the process. I am writing to request a final participant reflection on the questions we discussed during our interviews. This is completely optional but I wanted to provide you with an opportunity to share any final brief comments with me regarding your experience with shared governance at your institution. If you would please reply to this email by DATE, that would be appreciated.

As ever, if you have questions or concerns, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Liz Glodek, MFA  
Drake University  
School of Education  
Candidate, Doctorate in Education Leadership  
[elizabeth.glodek@drake.edu](mailto:elizabeth.glodek@drake.edu)  
917/991-4211

## **APPENDIX B**

### **SAMPLE SCRIPTS FOR INITIAL CONTACTS WITH PARTICIPANTS**

#### **Sample Script for Initial Phone Call to Contacts at Potential Colleges/Universities**

Hi, my name is Liz Glodek. I'm a doctoral candidate in Drake University's education leadership program. I was given your name by X, a colleague of mine from X to talk with you about the research study for my dissertation. Is this a good time for you?

I am interested in studying the lived experience of faculty who work at colleges using a shared governance model. I will be asking questions related to their experience with the shared governance model and their experiences with college administrators. I would like to interview only tenured faculty who have served in a leadership role (department, division, committee chair, faculty senate officer, etc.) at their institutions.

I'm calling you with two goals – 1) to ask if you would be interested/available to participate in the study, and 2) to see if you would be able to identify other potential faculty at your institution for me to invite to participate in the study. I am hoping to interview at least three faculty members at each institution I go to.

I will not be asking anyone to travel to me; I will visit each person at his or her office or other appropriate location but I would appreciate being able to coordinate my travel so that I can meet with faculty on the same day as much as possible

I would be happy to send you an email with more details as well as the informed consent document. But do you have any questions right now that I can answer?

Thank you for considering this request. Just to confirm, what is the best email to reach you on? I have your school email address, but do you prefer me to email you at a different account?

#### **Email to Faculty Participants with Informed Consent Document**

Dear Name,

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me earlier. As discussed, this email will provide more detail on my research study on the lived experience of faculty at colleges using a shared governance model of institutional governance. I have also attached the informed consent document.

I will be interviewing at least three faculty members at each of three different Midwest institutions. I would like to interview only tenured faculty who have served in a leadership role (department, division, committee chair, faculty senate officer, etc.) at their institutions. Your participation will help me investigate the lived experience of faculty who work within a system of shared governance and their perceptions of their relationships with college administrators.

I will be using a heuristic phenomenological approach to the study, which involves several points of contact detailed here:

- 1) initial contact/introduction of the project and informed consent document (attached for your review and consideration);
- 2) the first 45 minute informal interview (by phone or in person; whichever is most convenient);
- 3) the emailed general interview guide;
- 4) the one hour semi-structured open-ended interview (in person); and
- 5) participant validity/clarity (I will email a transcript of your one hour interview, which you will be able to check for accuracy and clarity.). This may include a final interview if needed.

This email will serve as the initial contact should you be available to continue with the study.

I will not be asking anyone to travel to me; I will visit each participant at his or her office or other appropriate location but I would appreciate being able to coordinate my travel so that I can meet (separately) with faculty participants who work at the same institutions on the same day as much as possible. As a token of my appreciation, I will be providing each participant a \$10 gift card.

Thank you for your consideration. I do hope that you'll be able to participate in the study and look forward to hearing from you. If you have questions, please let me know—my contact information is below.

Sincerely,

Liz Glodek, MFA  
Drake University  
School of Education  
Candidate, Doctorate in Education Leadership  
[elizabeth.glodek@drake.edu](mailto:elizabeth.glodek@drake.edu)  
917/991-4211

## APPENDIX C

### INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

**Title of Study:** The Lived Experience of College Faculty in a Shared Governance Environment

**Investigator:** Liz Glodek

This is a heuristic phenomenological research study. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

#### INTRODUCTION

This study is for a dissertation at Drake University, in partial completion of their doctoral program in education leadership. The purpose of this study is to learn more about the lived experiences of college faculty in a shared governance environment. You are being invited to participate in this study because of your status as a tenured professor who has experience as either a committee or department chair at an institution using a shared model of institutional governance.

#### DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate, there will be three interviews that are employed as a part of collecting the data appropriate for heuristic phenomenological research (Moustakas, 1990):

- 1) An informal conversational interview that will rely on a natural exchange of ideas that may generate additional questions and topics to consider for the research study.
  - a. This interview will happen either by phone or in person and last for approximately 45 minutes.
- 2) The general interview guide that will outline a set of issues or topics to be explored that might be shared with participants.
  - a. This will be emailed to you ahead of the third interview.
- 3) The semi-structured open-ended interview will include questions that all research participants will be asked. The questions will be purposeful and consistently asked of all participants. (Patton, 1990)
  - a. This will be an in person interview to last for approximately 1 hour.

Your participation will last for four weeks and will include at least five points of contact: 1) initial contact/introduction of the project and informed consent; 2) the first 45 minute informal interview; 3) the emailed general interview guide; 4) the 1 hour semi-structured open-ended interview; and 5) participant validity/clarity. The first contact will be an email which will provide more information on the project and include this informed consent form for your review. To perform the participant validity, you will be provided a transcript of the interview, which you

will be able to check for accuracy and clarity. There may be a final interview if needed. An optional one-page participant reflection will be solicited via email about a week following the final interview. This reflection will support triangulation and consistency of information as recommended by Patton (1990).

## **RISKS**

While participating in this study, it is highly unlikely that you will encounter physical, psychological, or legal risks of any kind. As with any study regarding a personal narrative interview, there is a possibility of minimal emotional risk or ethical dilemma associated with disclosing personal sentiment toward administration, faculty, staff, and students. Every precaution will be taken to ensure minimal risk.

## **BENEFITS**

If you decide to participate in this study there may be no direct benefit to you. It is hoped that the information gained in this study will provide greater insight into faculty perceptions of their college administrators in a shared governance environment. This study could be useful in helping colleges identify ways to improve their shared governance structures and relationships between faculty and administrators.

## **COSTS AND COMPENSATION**

You will not have any costs from participating in this study. While you will not receive any formal compensation for participating in this study, I will provide refreshments during the one hour interview and a \$10.00 gift card in appreciation of your time.

## **PARTICIPANT RIGHTS**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time. If you decide to not participate in the study or leave the study early, it will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, federal government regulatory agencies, auditing departments of Drake University, and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: your identity will be kept confidential and any identifiers (such as your name and any names noted during the interview and place of employment) will be replaced with pseudonyms in the interview transcripts. All documentation of the interview will remain in the private password protected computer files of the researcher. Parties likely to view the data include Dr. Thomas Buckmiller, my Drake University dissertation committee chair and other members of my dissertation committee. The data collected will be retained until such time as the researcher (Liz Glodek) has completed and defended her dissertation. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential.

### QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study.

- For further information about the study, contact  
 Liz Glodek  
 917/991-4211 (cell)  
 515/961-1692 (work)  
[elizabeth.glodek@drake.edu](mailto:elizabeth.glodek@drake.edu)  
[liz.glodek@simpson.edu](mailto:liz.glodek@simpson.edu)
- If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 271-3472, [IRB@drake.edu](mailto:IRB@drake.edu), Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa 50311.

### PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document, and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent prior to your participation in the study.

Participant's Name (printed)

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(Participant's Signature)

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(Date)

## APPENDIX D

### EXAMPLE OF THEMATIZING

Faculty value communication and transparency and recognize how it influences their participation in decision-making

- Communication
  - faculty meeting
    - not easy to have conversations because of the size of meetings
  - faculty interactions with the president and dean
  - interactions among the faculty
  - presidents' distancing the board from the faculty
  - conversations addressing shared governance and what it means
    - providing evidence to make the case
    - working together to resolve the situation
    - making the institution the best that it can be together
- A lack of transparency decreases faculty support for decisions made for their institutions
  - the president and the dean are responsible for creating an open environment
    - hostile leadership
    - lack of transparency leads to anxiety, distrust, and wariness for faculty and staff
  - tenured faculty are responsible for challenging decisions made without faculty input
    - presidential faculty hires without departmental input
    - potential loss of important major in liberal arts
- Adequate transparency increases faculty support for decisions made for their institutions
  - the president and the dean working with the faculty are responsible for creating an open environment
    - the ability of faculty to challenge board decisions
    - the creation of committees to involve all stakeholders
      - e.g. financial affairs committee
  - creates an environment where faculty are more accepting of decisions made, even if they are not involved in the decision-making
    - understand that some decisions around the overall budget need more confidentiality
    - if faculty are really concerned about something, they don't hesitate to approach the president



**APPENDIX E****COMMONLY REFERRED TO FACULTY AND INSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEES**

Admissions Committee  
Appointment and Promotions Committee  
Assessment Committee  
Campus Speakers Committee  
Community Life Committee  
Curriculum and Academic Policies Committee  
Faculty Council  
Faculty Development Committee  
Financial Affairs Committee  
General Education Committee  
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee  
Institutional Review Board  
International Studies Committee  
Library and Technology Committee  
Search Committee  
Special Decisions Committee  
Strategic Planning Committee

**APPENDIX F****COMMON CAMPUS ROLES MENTIONED IN THE RESEARCH**

Board of Trustees

President

President's Cabinet

Vice President of Academic Affairs/Dean

Vice President of Finance

Vice President of Admissions

Vice President of Student Life

Associate Academic Dean

Faculty

Division Chair

Department Chair

Staff

Students